

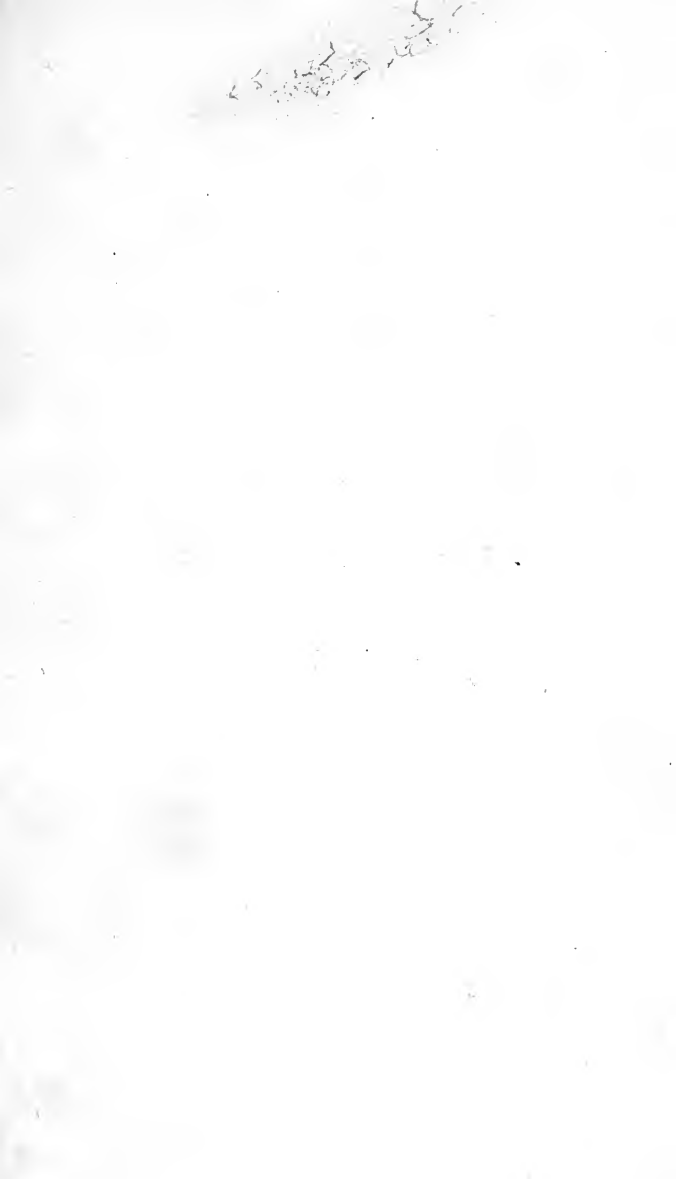
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THE LITTLE BOOK

BY J. H. B. B. B.

IN THE

THE LENTEN SEASON.

DISCOURSES

ON

RETIREMENT AND SELF-DENIAL.

SELECTED FROM THE WORKS OF THE MOST EMINENT
ENGLISH DIVINES OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND
EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.



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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

WHAT machinery is to man's physical powers—what rules are to his memory, and other intelligent faculties—such is discipline to his moral and religious being: at once the evidence and support of weakness. Had he persevered in his original integrity, stated forms and observances would have been as needless to him, as artificial reservoirs and a painful system of irrigation, in “a land of brooks and fountains,” and amid the “sound of” a perpetual “abundance of rain.” In the Paradisiacal state, every day was a day of worship; every spot was sacred: the sun no sooner rose, than its light was a summons to prayer: every opening glade, and embowered valley, presented a temple; for at all times, and in all places, the pious heart overflowed with love to its Maker, and the grateful tongue was ready to offer its sacrifice of prayer and praise.

But man fell; and sin entered into the world, and labour, and sorrow A thousand necessities

now distracted his attention ; a thousand desires engrossed his heart. He was continually drawn aside from meditation upon great and enduring things, and from the care of his nobler being, in search of individual enjoyment, or by the urgency of domestic wants. In proportion as societies multiplied, and civilization advanced, these tendencies and necessities increased ; for when men congregate together, in cities and large communities, it is not in order to be taught to think, or stimulated to devotion, but to seek pleasure ; to contrive by the combined ingenuity of many the most efficient methods of averting misery ; to accumulate wealth, and to extend and consolidate power :—in short, if left to themselves, they inevitably become more and more absorbed in the objects and occupations of the present, and daily grow more disinclined to look into or above themselves, for such as relate to things permanent and imperishable. Hence, but for seasons and methods of stated recalment from the importunities of worldly pursuits, there will ever be among the multitude a swift and unvarying progress in infidelity and vice. That the whole antediluvian race had, in so few generations, “ corrupted themselves,” and turned from God, can be accounted for only by the self-productive quality of evil, in a rapidly increasing population, as yet unsubjected to the wholesome restraints of positive ordinances.

The like tendency, which so quickly made its appearance among the descendants of Noah, was mercifully arrested by the origination of various languages in the plains of Mesopotamia, and by the disposition to emigrate, to which that mysterious event gave rise. But when they too had greatly multiplied, and numerous communities were spread far and wide, on all sides, from the central point of population, then had arrived the period when the knowledge of God, and the hope of a promised Deliverer could no longer be maintained in their purity, without some system which should convert the social fabric itself into an artificial defence for their preservation against the inroads of surrounding darkness and impending barbarism. A solitary line of inspired patriarchs was no longer sufficient to guard the hallowed flame upon the altar nor the simple economy of a household, an adequate provision for its ministry. From these, therefore, a nation was raised up, set apart, and furnished for the purpose with a system of exclusive ordinances, the elaborateness of whose details, no less than the awful grandeur of its sanctions, fully evinces the difficulty and importance of the trust committed to it, as the sole depository of revealed truth, during fifteen hundred years of political change, and of moral and theological eclipse, in the world around.

The religious observances of the Jews were of a character consistent with this design. The conse-

quences of sin were to be averted by the intervention of the priest; by the performance of public expiatory rites, (rites, however, the efficacy of which belonged to them only in their character of symbols) rather than to the heartfelt penitence of the offender. Though 'by the law is the knowledge of sin;' though the sternness of its language and the rigour of its exactions, sufficiently declared to the nation their own sad deserts, and the strictness of the divine justice; yet but few of its ordinances relate to the parts and instruments of true repentance. Only one day of solemn humiliation was appointed to be observed yearly. Custom, indeed, and the authority of the heads of the people, added others, from time to time, as marks of affliction and mourning for national calamities. Of individual abstinence and humiliation, we have numerous instances recorded of pious Hebrews, in every period of the Commonwealth; and it is evident, from the references made to the subject in the Gospels, that frequent fasts, and other acts of mortification, were regarded in our Lord's time, and long had been, as essential parts of piety. (Matt. vi. 16, 18; ix. 14; Luke, xviii. 22.)

With the abolition of the Hebrew ritual, no observance was allowed to perish, which possessed such a moral force, or was capable of such general application, as rendered it of value for all persons and for all ages. The things which 'decayed and

waxed old, and vanished away,' were allowed to do so, because with the change of circumstances, and the giving of 'a better dispensation,' they had become needless, inapplicable, or inefficient. The fabric of the Mosaic rites and ceremonies fell, because it was fitted exclusively for a nation which was no longer to exist in a condition, or with a purpose, that would require or admit its continuance. Whatever tended, however, to moral improvement, by promoting personal sanctity, and intercourse with God, was to remain

Hence the respect with which our Saviour spoke of Fasting. He did not enjoin it upon his immediate disciples—at least, during his abode among them. The mission of John the Baptist was penitential and preparatory. The Messiah's advent was ushered in by 'the sign of the prophet Jonah;' that is, by a call to repentance and humiliation; but our Lord put, in this respect, a marked distinction between his own mission and that of his precursor. When reproached that his disciples did not fast so often as those of the pharisees, or of John, he answered, that 'the children of the bride-chamber ought not to fast while the bridegroom was with them; but,' added he, 'the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast.' He denies not—nay, he admits by implication, the propriety of the observance at fitting seasons. The same is

the inference from the sermon on the mount ; for though he enjoined upon that occasion no particular or stated period of abstinence, he yet gives directions for observing this discipline, as an occasional duty, with sincerity, and an avoidance of hypocritical display. And by his miraculous fast of forty days' duration, while exercised with temptations of peculiar violence, he bequeathed to the church, what in every age it has regarded as an example of the utility—in some cases, the necessity—of such external aids to the regulation of those appetites and affections which, while in the world, so easily betray us into sin; and to prepare the mind for future virtuous exertions.

Much angry discussion respecting the constitution and discipline of the Christian church, in the apostolic age, might have been spared, had the contending parties previously agreed upon these two obvious facts:—first, that the religious sentiments of the Christians of the first century were too pure, and their zeal too ardent, either greatly to need the stimulus supplied by positive institutions, or to bear the coercive force of authoritative discipline: secondly, that the external condition of the new community allowed of no observances beyond the most simple and essential. Outward forms and helps to devotion are needless, where the inward principle, in their tendency to sustain and promote which lies their only worth, exists already

in the plenitude of its power, As long as the fervent spirit of piety retained its primitive lustre unclouded, what occasion could there be for the imposition of onerous observances? Custom and ceremony, peculiar seasons for awakening and demonstrating religious feeling, were little regarded, until the declining ardour of the Christian body sought—because it felt that it then wanted—such extraneous assistances.

That from the times of the apostles, however, two remarkable institutions, designed for this purpose, were in existence, has been often shown: These are—the dedication of the first day of the week to works of piety and services of religious gratitude, in memory of our Saviour's resurrection; and the annual appropriation of a certain period to the several parts of the discipline of repentance. As the season appointed for this latter appears to have always immediately preceded the anniversary of the crucifixion, it has obtained in our language the name of LENT—from the Saxon word *lengten* or *lenten*—spring.¹ That the Lent fast is of the

¹ The occurrence of the quadragesimal fast at this particular season could hardly fail to be turned to a moral account by the pious fancy of the Fathers: "Ut," observes Ambrose, "in quadragesima constricta hiemali gelu terra resolvitur, et aquarum fluentia meatus suos, glacie liquefacta, recipiunt; sic quoque corporum nostrorum hoc eodum tempore contracta sceleribus peccata solvuntur, et vitæ nostræ purior cursus, liquefacto rigore diaboli, meatum suum pristinum recognoscit."—As in Lent the earth is freed from the constraint of the winter's frost, and upon

highest antiquity in the church, cannot be doubted. In the celebrated dispute between the eastern and western churches, respecting Easter, which was concluded by the authority of the Council of Nice, in 325, both the contending parties agreed that a fast ought to precede it; the subject of the dispute being, in fact, on what day the fast should terminate; and it is evident from the language used on this subject, by the early Christian writers, those of this century especially, that it was universally observed as of apostolical authority. As no account of its origin is extant, no probable evidence can be adduced in opposition to this opinion.¹ Whether from its first institution it was of forty days' duration, cannot be so easily ascertained. That this was the period assigned to it, however, at the time of the Council of Nice, appears from the name given to it in the decree of that assembly, the same by which it has been universally known in the church in later times.² It would seem, however, that the period long varied according

the thawing of the ice the streams renew their course; so in the same season is the sinner set free from the bondage of guilt, and his life, no longer frost-bound as it were by Satan, resumes its pristine course, in purity.—Serm. xii. de Sancta Quad.

¹ Bishop Gunning, in his "Paschal, or Lent Fast Apostolical and Perpetual," cites a long array of the Fathers of the earliest times and highest credit, from Irenæus, downward, in favour of its apostolic origin.

² Σύνοδοι γινέσθωσαν μία μὲν πρὸ τῆς τεσσακοστῆς.—
Can. 5

to different times and places, but was finally determined as we at present observe it, viz. as including forty days, without reckoning Sundays, on which it has never been the custom of the church to fast. This number was most likely fixed in imitation of Moses and Elias; but, more particularly, of our Lord's fast of forty days in the wilderness.¹

The discipline practised in the primitive ages during Lent, was directed to the following objects:—to fit the whole body of the faithful, or Christians already baptized, for receiving the Lord's Supper in the celebration of Easter, by acts of mortification, repentance, and public devotion; to prepare the catechumens for admission into the church by baptism; and to exercise penitent offenders in the discipline necessary before absolution. Great reliance was placed in the efficacy of fasting; none but infants or persons infirm from age or other causes being allowed to taste food till the afternoon, on any day except Sunday.² All public games and amusements were prohibited with the utmost severity.³ After the establishment of Christianity

¹ Chrysost. Hom. prim. in Genes.

² Moneo et contestor vos, ut nullus vestrum, nisi forte sit infirmus, aut infans, et nisi in dominicis diebus, ante nonam mandeducet aut bibat.—Ambr. Ser. ix. in Sanct. Quad.

³ Chrysost. Hom. vi. and vii. in Gen. In the former of these discourses the eloquent Father severely reproaches the people of Antioch for being present at the games of the circus during Lent.

as the religion of the state, the civil power vied with the ecclesiastical in respect for this solemn season. The Theodosian code forbids all prosecution at this time for criminal actions, which might subject the offender to torture. As the close of the forty days approached, the severity of the observance was increased in proportion. The week immediately preceding Easter, our "Passion Week," called by the early Christians the "Great" or "Holy Week,"¹ was entirely employed in devotion and the distribution of alms, and was marked by a more rigid abstinence. Servants were allowed relaxation from labour, all legal processes were suspended, and the prison doors were thrown open, and prisoners released, except in particular cases.² The communion was twice administered on the Thursday; and, on Good Friday, the absolution of penitents appears to have taken place. At all other seasons, Saturday, as well as Sunday, was esteemed a festival; but the Saturday following the day of the crucifixion was observed by a strict fast, which was continued till day-break on Sunday, the supposed time of our Lord's resurrection. The night was passed in a solemn vigil, in which the assembled faithful prayed, read the Scriptures, sang psalms, preached, and baptized the Catechumens.

¹ Chrys. Hom. xxx. in Gen.

² Id. Ibid.

From these holy exercises great benefits followed, in the early periods of the church. The seriousness and severity with which they were enforced made a deep impression upon men's minds, restraining them from readily falling into sin, at least for a time; they were the means of renewing the intercourse of the soul with God, of reanimating the faith of languishing believers, by fixing their minds upon the great sacrifice for sin, and of receiving fresh supplies of grace. Hence much of the remarkable piety and strict holiness of the primitive ages has been attributed, and with seeming justice, to the effect of this annual solemnity. What greatly tended, no doubt, to that happy result, was the choice of this period by the bishops and pastors of the church, as the fittest to inculcate from the pulpit, not only those lessons which related to the effectual observation of Lent, but the general doctrines and duties of the Christian profession. This indeed was the season principally appropriated to preaching: few sermons were delivered at any other; and therefore it is that we meet with so large a proportion of Lent discourses in the works of Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, and others of the Fathers.

In the extravagant importance, however, which came to be ascribed to the services of this season,—in thus collecting into one brief period those de-

vout exercises which were to nourish the souls of believers, and secure the integrity of their morals, throughout the year,—we may discover the seeds of that superstitious reverence, which subsequently reduced the sacred observances of the Lent Fast to vain and even impious forms. The writings of the Fathers abound in magnificent and overstrained eulogies, in which an efficacy is ascribed to the devotions of this season far superior to every other.

The tendency of such exaggerations, in their effect upon the minds of the ignorant, though unsuspected by their pious authors, is to us sufficiently obvious. No wonder, therefore, if, when the whole of religion degenerated into formal ceremony, the period of Lent was distinguished above every other by those ‘bodily exercises which profit nothing,’ and by formalities which affect the senses while they stupify the judgment and corrupt the heart. So long as the mere external form was found to be sufficient to maintain the minds of the people in imbruted subjection, their teachers cared not that the essential principle, which alone imparted to them their value, had fled. Thus it was, as regarded the useful but abused discipline of fasting: the end of the ordinance was defeated, by shifting the essential point of it, from entire abstinence or extreme tempe-

rance, to a mere change in the material of the indulgence. Flesh was indeed rigorously avoided, but pains were at the same time taken to furnish, from other viands, delicacies yet more flattering to the appetite—the exact abuse denounced by our Lord, among the pharisees, whose fastings were for hypocritical display, to win praise from those who looked but to the letter of the ordinance.¹ Again penance, which, though occasionally objectionable, on the ground of extreme the rigour with which it was imposed by the primitive disciplinarians, was of powerful aid in preserving the purity of the church, degenerated at last into a merely formal confession of all persons, whether in the condition of penitents or not; from whom the only sign of repentance required, was that they should comply with the empty ceremony of having their heads sprinkled with ashes. It is from this custom that the name of Ash-Wednesday is derived.² Many puerile customs distinguished the several divisions of Lent, calculated only to amuse the vulgar, and divert the at-

¹ Matt vi.

² The ashes used on this occasion, were obtained from the palms, blessed on the Palm Sunday of the preceding year. The annual ceremony of placing ashes on the heads of the pope, cardinals, prelates, &c. at Rome, is still one of the most solemn ceremonies in the Papal church.

tention of the worshippers from the proper solemnities of the time; and we may doubt which, in our own days, are more injurious to the minds of the people, whether the folly and levity of the Popish carnival, or the pompous exhibitions and profane shows which diversify the succeeding period of mortification.

Together with the other corrupt and superstitious observances that had found their way into the church of Rome, our reformers discarded all those which deformed this holy season. They restored the use of fasting, according to the custom of the earliest ages;¹ but probably feeling that, after such an interval of laxity, the people were no longer in a condition to bear the reimposing of so severe a yoke, the ancient discipline of penance was omitted. Not, however, to leave the Lent of the reformed church unmarked by any observance proper to recall sinners to a due sense of their fearful condition, and to deter others,

¹ The stated times for abstinence, besides the great annual fast of Lent, are—the three Rogation days, (from *rogationes*, supplications,) or those which immediately precede our Lord's ascension; the Ember days, (a word of doubtful origin, but probably referring to the custom of sitting upon ashes, or sprinkling the head with them, as an act of humiliation and penance,) viz. the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, in the weeks after the first Sunday in Lent, after Whit-Sunday, after September 14th, and December 13th; to which are added all the Fridays in the year, in memory of the crucifixion.

they substituted the service for Ash-Wednesday, entitled a "Commination, or denouncing of God's anger against sin."¹ It would appear, however, that this insufficient substitute for penitentiary discipline was only to be used, "until," in the words of the compilers, "the said discipline may be restored again, which is much to be wished:"—"to be wished, rather than expected, in these licentious times," subjoins the commentator on our book of Common Prayer;² and, alas! the period that has since elapsed, without lessening the necessity, has greatly diminished the probability, of this desirable restoration!

The neglect, and, in too many cases, the contempt, into which the solemn observance of Lent has fallen, is one of the multitude of instances in which extremes beget extremes. When the early writers lavished their panegyrics upon this "divine medicine of the soul," and represented that by the penitence of the quadragesimal period the sins of all the rest of the year were to be removed, they were preparing the way for those superstitious abuses which, in their turn, produced

¹ As this service, the propriety of which has been often controverted, still continues to give offence to not a few well-meaning persons, room has been spared in the present volume for a Sermon, (Sermon II.) in which the reader will find the whole question satisfactorily discussed.]

² Wheatly.

our present worse than indifference. When, for example, the primitive discipline of fasting was degraded into a mere mockery of abstinence from some particular kinds of meats, while, at the same time, the whole design and principle of the ordinance were abandoned, we cannot wonder that plain, well-meaning Christians began to look upon it altogether as a vain superstition. To regard it in this light appeared, to too many, a mark of the sincerity of their Protestantism; and when hostility to a rival church was leagued with man's natural repugnance to mortification and self-denial, the result was what might have been anticipated. Yet we may plead, in favour of this ordinance, both an obvious usefulness, and a sanction, if not a command, from the highest authority. Why, if fasting were that indifferent, or even ridiculous ceremonial, which it is the fashion to consider it, did our Lord himself give directions about the manner of its observance? and how came he to rank it with prayer and almsgiving, two of the most indispensable duties of the Christian; directing us at the same time, and in equivalent terms, to pray, to fast, and to give alms?¹ The utility of abstinence, as a means of subduing our earthly to our spiritual being, is strongly urged by the apostle of the Gentiles, from his own example; who certainly

¹ Matt. vi.

might better have dispensed with such a restraint than many of those who hold it in irreverent disregard: 'I keep my body under,' says he, 'and bring it into subjection.' So important an instrument and means of piety has it in all ages been deemed, until our own or very recent times, that no Christian church has existed, in which fasts, especially at this season, have not been imposed and strictly practised. We must not flatter ourselves that our modern scorn of this discipline is to be ascribed to the essential power of religion in the mind rendering its aid needless; but rather to the general impatience of authority, to the conceit of partial knowledge, and to that indifference to the object proposed, which of course extends itself to the means of its attainment. In our advanced stage of civilization, amid the ever-enlarging circle of objects which engage the attention and stimulate the passions of mankind, the heart continually becomes more and more liable to be drawn away from the pursuits and hopes of religion. Those periodical observances and positive forms, therefore, which have a tendency to confine the affections, and fix and arrest the distracted thoughts, ought to be cherished and enforced with proportionate care and assiduity.

The advantages of this institution, then, are evident. As certainly as the revolving year comes

round, it arrests the attention of the worldling, buried in the multitude of his temporal pursuits, and recalls the sinner from his evil way. As often as the first day of the solemn period of Lent arrives, a voice resounds through our Christian community, which proclaims the heinousness of transgression, the terrors of divine justice, the inevitableness of impending judgment upon unrepented transgression. Thus brought to a sense of our condition and prospects, as having 'all offended,' we are invited to seek retirement for a season from the cares and seductions of life,—to examine our past course—to ascertain the state of our hearts and minds—to call ourselves to account, and take that naked and impartial view of what we are, which is taken by the Almighty himself. This, if performed with tolerable fairness and sincerity, will not fail to lay open to our consciences so many evidences of frailty, such marks of guilt, as must force us to sorrow and confession. We shall come to the footstool of the Divine mercy, acknowledging our utter unworthiness; and, with repentant tears and resolutions of amendment, implore—not only pardon for the past, but strength to stand fast for the time to come. We shall willingly afflict ourselves, shall mourn in the dust and ashes of unfeigned humility, and shall heartily acknowledge, while under these salutary convictions, that what-

soever purifying trials our God may bring upon us, they must needs be less than we have deserved, and but a gracious and healthful discipline, calculated for our real good.

Looking forward now to the awful solemnities which are collected together towards the close of the season, we endeavour to animate our faith and confirm our feeble resolutions, by directing our view to him, 'who has left us an example, that the same mind should be in us which was also in him.' Our Saviour passing triumphantly through unequalled temptation, and submitting to unparalleled sorrow, presents a spectacle at once melting and ennobling. We learn of him to say, in all our afflictions, 'Father, not my will, but thine be done!' Then is felt the efficacy of prayer—its softening, sanctifying, strengthening efficacy. We supplicate the Holy Spirit to be with us in our afflictions,—to remove from us the cup of intolerable misery, and to lighten such as may and must be borne, by sanctifying it and blessing it to us. But the period advances; and now the penitent is prepared to look with purer eyes and a deeper interest upon his suffering Lord; and now the gathering darkness which frowns and lowers over the mountain of the cross, rivets his attention, and fixes his whole soul upon that most touching spectacle, the death of the Redeemer, who 'was delivered for us,' that we by him and through him

'might possess all things.' Behold, now, the wondrous close!—the deepest mystery of triumphant love—God agonized for man! Yet, restrain we a vain and misplaced compassion. Let us not presume to weep *for him* but 'for ourselves and our children'—for our fallen race, the guilty cause of all that we here contemplate. With these profound but chastened impressions, we may now draw nigher, and look more narrowly on that divine victim for sin, 'whose visage was marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men.'¹ We may witness the intensity of his sufferings, and take thence the estimate of his measureless mercy—of our unfathomable guilt—of our unutterable danger! Yet is this sight of woe, a sight, at the same time, of gladness. How do we rejoice in it, amidst our tears! Beginning to look forward, again, from the grave in which we see him deposited, to his approaching resurrection, we now remember, that if we would be 'quickened with him' we must likewise die with him—die to sin—die to self—die to the world—die to all things that were, and are, his foes. Withdrawn again by no unhallowed curiosity, from these contemplations on our own immediate interest in the atonement, we follow in imagination the crucified Saviour, who for a time has laid aside the burdensome veil of flesh, which he had as-

¹ Isaiah, lii. 14.

sumed. Our pious thoughts accompany him into the mysterious abodes of departed souls, where he sojourns for a time among 'the spirits in prison,' working even in that lower world of bodiless intelligences the 'work which his Father gave him to accomplish;' prepared, however, soon to resume for a space his sojourn here on earth, by a resurrection, in which he 'leads captivity captive,' and vanquishes death—'the last enemy that shall be destroyed.'

The course of devout exercises thus slightly sketched, it is the design of the present volume to assist. It would have been easy to make the selection consist more exclusively of what are usually called Lent Sermons; but the opinion of the Editor was, that the series would be more likely to prove interesting and profitable to the reader, by taking in a wider range both of authors and subjects.

Should it be alleged, as an objection to the volume, that the discourses it comprises are brought together from writers of diverse tenets and opinions on important points, the answer is, first, that it was intended to comprise an epitome of all that our best sermon-writers have left, upon "subjects proper for Christian consideration during the season of Lent;" secondly, that the Editor has endeavoured, notwithstanding, to avert the force of the objection, by taking care not to select from the several

authors—especially from such as may be of suspected orthodoxy—any of those productions, in which their objectionable bias is apparent. The book presents, therefore, great and characteristic variety, in every way, without, it is hoped, an offensive absence of harmony in style and manner, or considerable contrariety of statement.

The Editor, in conclusion, will be much misunderstood, if any of the preceding remarks lead the reader to suppose his desire is to see the revival of a system of morals that could be justly condemned as ascetic. Such would assuredly not be his aim, were he gifted with the power of persuasion necessary to secure it. Yet, for the season to which this volume relates, he thinks it not too much to wish, as an ancient writer has well expressed it, that we could live a life of retirement, even in the midst of society—*habentes conversationem in urbibus, possideamus mente desertum*.¹ He certainly does not think the Christian world too wise, or too good, to be made yet wiser and better by a revival, to a reasonable extent, of the ancient discipline of abstinence: but let it be undertaken in the temper recommended by another of those estimable though neglected teachers. “Let us,” says St. Basil, “by no means receive the days that are approaching with sadness of heart, but with

¹ St. Ambrose.

cheerfulness as becometh saints.—Be not sad when thou art cured. It would be very foolish if we should grieve for the abstraction of our customary food, and not rather rejoice for the health of our souls.—Rejoice, then, that there is given to thee an efficacious remedy for sin.”

R. C.

Feb. 25, 1835.



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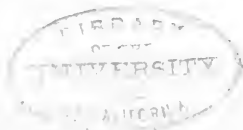
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SERMON I.
FOR ASH-WEDNESDAY.
BY ARCHBISHOP SECKER.

[THOMAS SECKER was born in the year 1693. He was made Bishop of Bristol in 1735, was translated to Oxford 1737, raised to the See of Canterbury in 1758 and died in 1768.]





S E R M O N I

GAL. v. 24

*And they, that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh,
with the affections and lusts*

THIS expression, 'crucifying the flesh,' may probably seem to most, when they first hear it, or attend to it, a very strange one; as, no doubt, numbers of others in Scripture do. But a little consideration will show, that there is no cause to censure them, or be offended at them. For amidst the multiplicity of languages that are in the world and the various nations, tempers, and circumstances of the people who are bred up to use them, it is unavoidable, but there will be in each many ways of speaking, which though easy and familiar by custom to one part of mankind, must yet, to the rest, appear harsh and unaccountable. This is the case even of neighbouring countries in our own times: much more then must it be expected in those tongues, of which the vulgar use hath long since failed, and which formerly expressed the sentiments of distant nations, inspired both by the age and climate they lived in, with a different turn of thought and style.

Hence proceeds the surprising warmth and boldness of figure, the abrupt transitions, the sudden lofty flights of the eastern writers and speakers, utterly contrary to the cool and regular genius of the European languages. And amongst the former, the compositions of the Jews must of course have a peculiar tincture and propriety of their own: not only because they were prohibited, for good reasons, all needless commerce with other lands; but chiefly because divine Revelation delivered to them such doctrines and precepts, and consequently such terms, as the heathen had not; which must likewise greatly increase in number by frequent references to their own articles of faith, observances, and sacred books. When Christianity was published to the world, here was again a new set of discoveries and ideas, added to the preceding; which being first communicated in Hebrew, were thence transfused into Greek, by the apostles addressing themselves to the Gentiles. Thus was the style of the New Testament produced: which being as literally translated, and closely imitated, as it well could, (for the nature of the thing required strictness,) the same forms of speech have been derived down into the modern tongues of Christian countries. And so it hath come to pass by a kind of necessity, that, in discourses on religion, words, meanings, constructions, images, occur, extremely remote from the common idiom of the language on other occasions. And these, weak persons are apt to mistake, artful disputants to pervert, and unlearned or unfair affecters of wit and free thought to ridicule; though originally they were of plain signification, and are still, when understood, full of good sense and beauty.

Thus 'crucifying,' or as the apostle elsewhere puts it, 'mortifying' the flesh,' is a phrase far out of the road of our daily conversation, and of our reading on subjects of business and entertainment: from whence it easily happens that the superstitious misapprehend, and the profane despise it; though indeed it denotes a reasonable, a necessary duty, and describes that duty, not only in a strong, but elegant manner. To show these things clearly, I shall,

I. Explain to you the rise and general intention of this way of speaking :

II. Specify more distinctly the nature of the duty designed to be taught by it :

III. Show you how strictly our belonging to Christ obliges us to practise that doctrine.

I. I shall explain to you the rise and general intention of this way of speaking in Scripture.

Now the words, flesh and spirit, though employed by the writers of the New Testament in different senses, according to the subject of which they treat, are yet commonly expressions of the moral state and character of man; the dispositions of his heart towards piety or sin. Spirit is the principle of reason and religion; flesh, of appetite and passion. Every one feels in himself both right and wrong inclinations. The former our conscience approves. And therefore pursuing them would on that account alone be properly called, 'walking after the Spirit,'² that 'inward man, which naturally delighteth in the law of God.'³ But a much stronger ground for it is, that the Divine Spirit hath not

¹ Col. iii. 5.

² Rom. viii. 4.

³ Rom. vii. 22

only revealed to us the whole rule of life, and the most powerful motives to observe it, but is continually present to our minds, exciting and strengthening us, if we permit him, to every good work. On the other hand, 'all flesh having corrupted his way before God,'¹ sinners may be justly said to 'walk after the flesh,' because they live conformably to the wicked customs of the world. But the true foundation of the phrase is, that this 'corruptible body'² subjects the fallen children of Adam perpetually by its irregular propensities, to a variety of temptations, hard to be overcome. And therefore even heathen authors have represented it as the principal source of moral evil: no wonder then, that those of Scripture do, on fuller knowledge of the case.

But in St. Paul more especially the flesh means our vicious tendencies; not only those to sensual indulgence, but the whole system of them. Thus in the thirteenth verse of this chapter, 'Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh:' that is, to any blamable purpose. But the particular blamable use, which he had in view, was that of uncharitable contention. For it follows immediately, 'But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.' Again: having said, that 'the works of the flesh are manifest,'³ he proceeds to reckon amongst them, not only 'adultery and lasciviousness,' but 'variance, envy, strife, sedition.' And the 'fruits of the Spirit,' opposed to these, are not only 'temperance,' but 'long-suf-

¹ Gen. vi. 11, 12.

² Wisd. ix. 15.

³ Ver. 19.

fering, peace, goodness, faith,' or fidelity, 'meekness.'

Further: because there is a connexion and sympathy between the various dispositions of the same kind, whether moral or immoral, each adding vigour and strength to the other; the several vices to which mankind are prone, are described in God's word as uniting into and forming a living body, hence denominated 'the body of sin,' or of 'the lusts of the flesh ;'² of which every criminal inclination is a member. Thus, when the apostle had enjoined Christians to 'mortify their members, which are upon the earth,'³ he instantly explains himself to mean the parts of this figurative body of sin, which he goes on to enumerate: 'covetousness, anger, fornication, uncleanness, malice, blasphemy.'

And, in consequence of this, because not only the nature of all men is tainted originally, but the conduct of most men hath, in some respects at least, been habitually unjustifiable; therefore the sins which they have indulged, considered in the manner above-mentioned, as united into one organized body, are also styled in Scripture, 'the old man;' in opposition to that 'new man,' or blessed change of temper and behaviour, which the gospel was designed to produce. And however singular the former of these phrases may appear, the latter, which in itself is equally so, that of becoming a new man, is both frequent in our common speech, and warranted by the politest of classical authors.

This expression therefore having taken place, the

¹ Ver. 22.

² Col. ii. 11.

³ Col. iii. 5.

amendment of our hearts and actions is sometimes denoted by laying aside or putting off this old man. Thus, 'that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and put on the new man, which is created according to God,' that is, according to the image of God, 'in righteousness and true holiness.'¹ And because our gracious Redeemer was a perfect example of these, putting on the new man is elsewhere called, 'putting on the Lord Jesus Christ :'² a mode of speech fully vindicated by the ancient usage of the Greek tongue, in which the New Testament was written. For in that, putting on any person signified, forming one's self by his character, and imitating his manner.

At other times, this entire change of affections, will, and demeanour, is expressed more strongly. We are said to 'be dead to sin, and raised up again to walk in newness of life :'³ which means, to be separated for ever from bad habits and customs, and enter into a different state and course of thinking and acting; in which 'the former things are passed away, and all things are made new.'⁴ The promises indeed, of this renovation on our part, and of grace to accomplish it, and future happiness to reward it, on God's part, are first made in baptism: which therefore the Scripture⁵ calls our new birth to this new life. But then, it is only by continual care (if Providence allows us time) to grow in grace, and become every day more completely dead to all transgression, and

¹ Eph. iv. 22.² Rom. xiii. 14; Gal. iii. 27.³ Rom. vi. 2, 4.⁴ Rev. xxi. 4, 5.⁵ John, iii. 3—7.

alive to all duty, that we shall arrive at the maturity requisite for our acceptance.

Further yet: when the word of God intends to give us the most awakening sense, how entire our change must be, and with how unremitted a resolution we must arm ourselves against every bad inclination; then the expression chosen is, not that of dying to sin, but of mortifying, killing it. For the original signification of the words, translated 'mortify,' is not the now common one, of keeping under, and treating with some austerity, but of destroying, putting to death: as where the apostle saith, 'If through the Spirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body,' unlawful indulgences, 'ye shall live;'¹ and in the passage already cited, 'mortify therefore your members, which are upon the earth.' In pursuance of which mortal enmity between religion and wickedness, every serious believer considers himself as a 'soldier of Christ,'² whose whole life is to be a warfare against those 'lusts which war against the soul.'³

And lastly, because the great end of our Saviour's incarnation and death was to engage us in this good fight, and enable us to obtain the victory; therefore overcoming and sacrificing to him our unlawful desires, is, by an elegant allusion to the manner of his death, (which was painful and slow, like our extirpation of them,) called 'crucifying' them; not only here in the text, but in another parallel one; 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve

¹ Rom. viii. 13.

² 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4.

³ 1 Pet. ii. 11.

sin.’¹ Whence also our apostle saith further, that ‘by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ by the example of his sufferings, and the grace which they have procured, ‘the world is crucified unto him, and he unto the world.’² He regards it no more, than the Jews did our Saviour, when they condemned him to the most ignominious torments, but hates it mortally, and despises it utterly, so far as it is sinful; and is content, that, in return, it should hate and despise him, rather than comply with its wicked customs.

This then is true Christian mortification. And the figures, describing it, are indeed remarkably bold and full of energy; but they are accurate, instructive, animating; and, alas! but too necessary, to convince unthinking and unwilling creatures, as we are, (prone to explain away into nothing every precept we can,) of the zeal and severity with which we are to extirpate all that is faulty within our souls. The commands of our blessed Lord himself carry in them the same force: ‘if our right hand offends us, to cut it off; if our right eye, to pluck it out:’³ if any desire we feel, will be a probable occasion of our falling, to suppress it, however dear; if any action we are engaged in, to quit it, however advantageous in other respects. And the reason he adds, admits of no reply: ‘It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands or two eyes, to be cast into hell fire:’ it is better to undergo the most painful self-denial here, and be recompensed with heavenly felicity hereafter, than to enjoy the ‘pleasures of sin for a sea-

¹ Rom. vi. 6.

² Gal. vi. 14.

³ Matt. v. 29, 30; xviii. 8, 9; Mark, ix. 43, 45, 47.

son,¹ and suffer the vengeance of the Almighty for ever.

Having now explained the rise and general intention of the principal phrases of this sort in Scripture, I proceed

II. To specify more distinctly the nature of the duty designed to be taught by them.

And here you cannot fail to perceive at first sight, that harsh treatment of our bodily frame, only for the sake of treating it harshly, is no part of Christian mortification, or Christian duty. It is indeed a practice contrary to reason, and no less to Scripture. For St. Paul saith, 'no man,' that is, no wise man, 'ever hated his own flesh.'² Yet the opinion, that such things are in themselves acceptable to God, hath not only been common in false religions, but has crept into the true: and both furnished unbelievers with an objection against it, and misled believers very unhappily. For they, who fancy, that exercising rigour on their persons hath any good in it, separate from the good uses to which it may contribute, are some of them led to fancy also, that the further they carry it the better; till they hurt, perhaps ruin, their healths, disorder their understandings, or however sour their tempers: while others conceive, that there is very great merit in a very little suffering; and consequently persuade themselves, that God will readily excuse the smaller faults of a behaviour not quite so moral as it should be, on their punctual performance of their higher duties, as they esteem them; though, in truth, not only imaginary, but often of little more than imaginary hardship. And thus, whereas

¹ Heb. xi 25.

² Eph. v. 29.

common sinners are open to remorse of conscience, which there is hope may, sooner or later, through the grace of God, amend them; these, on the contrary, proceed self-applauded, and fully persuaded of their title to a distinguished share of divine favour. On which account our Saviour tells the Pharisees, men of austerity in some respects, and wondrous exactness in little matters, that 'the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before them.'

Not that Christians, of more abstemious lives than ordinary, are therefore to be condemned as Pharisees and hypocrites; or derided as weak and superstitious. Every one is bound to employ such means for his preservation from sin, and advancement in piety and virtue, as either God's word hath prescribed, or his own reason and experience recommend. Now some may find rules to be useful or necessary, which to others would be neither. Some again may rashly censure what they would do much better to imitate. And all persons, but especially all who live in ease and plenty, should be attentive to 'keep their bodies in subjection:'² not harassing them as enemies, but ruling and providing for them as servants, in such manner as to make them both willing to obey, and able to perform their work. They should watch over their natural fondness for pleasure, and tendency to follow the customs of the world; not with unreasonable scrupulousness, but with religious prudence: learn to suspect their favourite inclinations, and the opinions that countenance them: check themselves in proportion as they grow eager, stop and look

¹ Matt. xxi. 3.

² 1 Cor. ix. 27

round them with care : never adventure to the extremity of what is lawful, but in all dubious cases lean to the undoubtedly safer side : be moderate in the most allowable gratifications of this world, and delight principally in cultivating and improving those pious and virtuous affections, which alone can ‘make them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ;’¹ of a happiness entirely spiritual, and abstracted from flesh and blood.

But then, while we observe this caution in regard to worldly objects, we must be careful also, on the other hand, that we carry it not to dangerous or extravagant lengths ; that we seem not unthankful to, or suspicious of him, ‘who hath given us richly all things to enjoy ;’² that we disguise not religion by putting it in a melancholy and forbidding dress ; that we be not betrayed by the restraints, under which we lay ourselves, either into vain self-opinion and spiritual pride, or a rigidity of temper, very unsuitable to the gentle spirit of the Christian profession ; but particularly, that we forbear to condemn, or even despise, our brethren of more seeming latitude ; who, it may be, under the appearance of a freer life, (which was our Saviour’s own case, for he ‘came eating and drinking’³) preserve really and inwardly a stricter guard over their thoughts, words, and actions, than we do. And in general, all persons ought to take heed, that while they are watching against the approach of one sort of sins, those of another do not find a ready admission. We are willing enough to keep

¹ Col. i. 12.

² 1 Tim. vi. 17.

³ Matt. xi. 19 ; Luke, vii. 34.

at ever so great a distance from the faults to which we have little or no inclination, and often affect to make our zeal in that respect remarkable; but then perhaps more favourite vices have easy entrance into our breasts, and take firm possession of them. We are shocked, for instance, and with much cause, at the monstrous and ruinous eagerness for pleasure, the profligate and unprecedented contempt of religion, that prevails in the world; our behaviour, on these heads, is unblamable, exemplary; and we value ourselves upon it beyond bounds. Yet possibly, all the while, we indulge ourselves to the full another way: are unjust and fraudulent, or selfish and unreasonable, or penurious and hard-hearted, or censorious and unforgiving, or peevish and ill-tempered; make every one about us uneasy, and those chiefly, whose happiness ought to be our first care. This is applauding ourselves for being fortified, where the enemy is not likely to make an attack; and leaving the places that are most exposed, quite undefended. Every one therefore ought to study the weak parts of his own heart and conduct, and spend the main of his attention upon these: that so, not only a wrong inclination or two may be rooted up, (which if left to themselves would scarce grow,) or may be sacrificed in favour of others as bad; but the whole 'body of sin' be destroyed; the 'flesh,' the principle of evil, 'with' all 'its affections and lusts,' nailed to the cross of Christ.

And this duty of mortification is no more confined to one season than to one sin. The practice of it either must be constant, or will be fruitless. The time of Lent indeed hath been more especially appropriated to it: not that we should think the

show, or the reality, of a little more exactness than ordinary, for a few weeks, (productive perhaps only of ill humour,) so meritorious; that when we have once got it over, we may live almost as we please, till the unwelcome days return, when we are to atone afresh for our past offences, and so **make** way for the commission of future ones. For, as the son of Sirach observes, ‘He that washeth himself after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing? So is it with a man that fasteth for his sins, and goeth again and doth the same. Who will hear his prayer, or what doth his humbling profit him?’ Our great concern is to mortify all irregular desires with such incessant care, that there may be as little need, as little room as possible, to distinguish one season from another in that respect. But because we are strangely apt to postpone a work, generally disagreeable in proportion as it is necessary; our church hath wisely directed, that the negligent (and we all are such in some measure) should now be more solemnly called to consider their ways, afflict their souls for their transgressions, and renew the intermitted discipline which is requisite to make their hearts better. This is our true business at present. Methods of keeping Lent, which end with it, and leave behind them no durable effect, cannot be of much use; and may be fatal, by deceiving us into a false security, and forgetfulness of what I proposed to show you,

III. That our Christian profession strongly binds us to mortify continually every **immoral** appetite

¹ Eccclus. xxvii. 2. 6.

and passion. 'They, that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.'

Instead of this, the apostle might have said, (like the philosophers of his own and preceding times,) they who are truly rational beings, who see the beauty of virtue, and deformity of vice, who feel the pleasures and the pains of the moral sense, who form just notions of the real good and evil of man, who are ambitious of imitating their Creator and acquiring his favour in their present state of existence and perhaps a future one: but in saying, 'they who are Christ's,' he hath said all this, and much more. Christianity comprehends every consideration of nature and reason in the fullest manner; and as they are all insufficient, some too speculative and unaffecting, some too disputable and uncertain; adds others of inestimable value, peculiar to itself. A heathen may want almost entirely, and must want in a great degree, both the means of learning what mankind is most deeply interested in, and motives and power to practise what he had learned: a Christian, allowed to read and hear the word of God, cannot, without inexcusable negligence: and 'of them to whom much is given, much will be required.'¹ Through Christ, who hath enlightened us, we 'know all things';² 'through Christ which strengtheneth us, we can do all things':³ through Christ, who died for us, what we do shall be rewarded, though deserving nothing, with eternal life. And thus hath 'the grace of God, which bringeth salvation,' not only 'taught,'

¹ Luke, xii. 48.

² 1 John, ii. 20.

³ Phil. iv. 13.

but enabled us, 'denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.'¹ They, who are Christ's in name only, bind themselves to this: they, who are in reality his, perform it. 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:'² and 'the fruit of the Spirit,' we are told immediately before the text, and through the whole Scripture, are the pious movements of a good heart, and the actions of a good life. Our blessed Lord 'gave himself for us, that he might sanctify and cleanse us, and present us to himself holy and without blemish.'³ If then we labour not to become such, we frustrate, so far as our own concern reaches, his gracious intentions, and make his sufferings vain. If we crucify not our affections and lusts, 'we crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame;'⁴ pour contempt on his glorious undertaking ourselves, and expose it to the scorn of others: the consequence of which will be, that, as 'while we profess to know him, in works we deny him,'⁵ so will he in the day of judgment 'profess to us, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'⁶ Still it should be observed, that so far both good and bad Christians are his, as to be always under his dominion. 'None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself,' exempted from his authority: 'whether we live or die we are the Lord's';⁷ but the wicked continue under his government; just as upon earth, rebels continue subjects; not intitled to benefits from their Prince, but

¹ Tit. ii. 11, 12.³ Eph. x. 25, 26, 27.⁵ Tit. i. 16.² Rom. viii. 9.⁴ Heb. vi. 6.⁶ Matth. vii. 23.

Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

liable justly to sorer punishments than his other enemies. Think then, will you be 'Christ's at his coming,'¹ only to have 'vengeance taken of you in flaming fire,'² or, to 'enter with him into his glory?'³ If the latter be your choice, the only way to it is, that you think it not too much to crucify your flesh figuratively, renounce and destroy your forbidden desires, however painful it be, for him; since he thought it not too much to let his flesh literally be crucified for you. And if you will make sure of doing this at all, you must do it immediately.

Perhaps you will say, we hope it is done already: for the text assures us, all believers have done it. But observe: at that time almost all professed believers were real ones; for they had no temptation to make a false profession: and in general, speculative believers were practical ones; else they would never have suffered what they did. But in our times, the case is much altered. And in all times, the true method of arguing is not, 'we are Christ's,' and therefore we 'have crucified our affections and lusts;' but, 'we have crucified our affections and lusts,' and therefore 'we are Christ's.' Our faith must be proved from our works; not our works from our faith. By 'their fruits ye shall know them,'⁴ is the rule: and by those we must know our own state, as well as that of others. But supposing we have cause to believe it good, have we not greater cause to be sensible it is not perfect? And should we not be striving continually to make it more so? 'They that are Christ's,' the apostle

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 23.

³ Luke, xxiv. 26.

² 2 Thess. i. 8

⁴ Matth. vii. 20.

tells us, 'have crucified the flesh.' But he doth not tell us, they have done it so effectually and so completely, as they ought. On the contrary he tells us, that he himself had not yet 'attained,' but was still 'pressing on towards the mark.'¹ And surely we should be doing it without ceasing. Unless we are careful to advance, we shall be driven back; unless we pursue our enemy to destruction, though put to flight he will return; though wounded as it were 'to death, his deadly wound will be healed:'² and gradually, if not suddenly, his empire may become more absolute, and our condition more deplorable, than ever. At least he will be perpetually annoying us, disturbing our peace, taking away our comfort, darkening our prospects. Nor shall we be losers in this life only, by neglect of going on to perfection; but in the next also, the less complete the victory is, the smaller will be the reward: and they 'who have sown sparingly, shall reap also sparingly.'³ Let us therefore sow plentifully the seeds of every virtue; and extirpate with such diligence every 'root of bitterness,' that there may be the freest room and the fullest nourishment for every grace of the Christian life to flourish, and be fruitful. 'Of ourselves,' indeed, 'we can do nothing.'⁴ But this is far from being a just plea for stopping where we are, since 'God is able to make all grace abound towards us; that we, having always all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work.'⁵ Provided then we apply to him, by the means he hath appointed, and engaged to bless,—

¹ Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.² Rev. xiii. 3.³ 2 Cor. ix. 6.⁴ John, xv. 5.⁵ 2 Cor. ix. 8.

humble faith, earnest prayer, strict vigilance, and constant use of his holy ordinances,—we shall not fail to experience the truth of his promise: ‘They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings, as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.’¹

Isaiah, xl. 31.

SERMON II.
ON PUBLICLY DENOUNCING CURSES
UPON SINNERS.

BY SAMUEL CLARKE, D. D.

[SAMUEL CLARKE, born at Norwich, in the year 1675, died Rector of
St. James's, Westminster, 1729.]

1791
The first of the year
was a very cold one
and the snow lay
on the ground for
many days. The
frost was very
severe and the
wind was very
strong. The
snow was very
deep and the
frost was very
thick. The
wind was very
strong and the
snow was very
deep. The
frost was very
thick and the
wind was very
strong.

1792
The second of the year
was a very cold one
and the snow lay
on the ground for
many days. The
frost was very
severe and the
wind was very
strong. The
snow was very
deep and the
frost was very
thick. The
wind was very
strong and the
snow was very
deep. The
frost was very
thick and the
wind was very
strong.

S E R M O N I I.

DEUT. xxvii. 26.

Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

THE proper design and use of all public or private seasons of humiliation is, to recollect and examine carefully the state of our lives; to confess our past sins, with a just sense of our own unworthiness in committing them; humbly to ask pardon of God, for the breaches of his law we have been guilty of; to imprint upon our minds a deep sense of the reasonableness and obligation of our duty; to acknowledge the justice and righteousness of God's indignation, denounced against impenitent sinners; and to form within ourselves strong and solemn resolutions of better obedience for the future. To this end it is, that the law of God is held forth unto us, recommended with all the blessings, and fenced in with all the curses, that are written in his book. To this end it is, that the prophets in the Old Testament, and the apostles in the New, represent unto us in such sublime expressions, the happiness of obedience; and on the other hand, set forth, in

such moving and affectionate descriptions, the wrath of God, expressly revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. To this end it is, that our Saviour has appointed his ministers to continue, even unto the end of the world, persuading men to repentance, both by the love of God, and by the terrors of the Lord ; which, as it is at all times their perpetual duty, so more especially, at such seasons as are thought proper to be set apart for fasting and humiliation. The proper and Christian observation of which times, does not consist in superstitious distinctions of meats, for which there is no foundation either in the law of God or in the nature of things ; but it consists in such general abstinence, as every serious person finds, by his own experience, best to promote the performance of his whole Christian duty. In which matter, because the temper and constitution, and other accidental circumstances of every particular person, are different from others ; therefore no general rules can be given for all persons ; but every one for himself must in particular, with the prudence and sobriety of a Christian, determine the measure and degrees of that abstinence, which the law of God has not determined, and the laws or customs of men have in reason no power to determine. But some things there are very proper for all persons, and wherein the whole church may join without distinction. Such are confessions of sin, public acknowledgments of the righteousness of God's laws, and solemn deprecations of his judgments ; which acts of devotion, as they are always proper, so it has wisely been judged that the performing them with greater solemnity, at certain periods or seasons set apart for

public humiliation, may be very advantageous and helpful towards the keeping up a public spirit of religion in a nation. And there was the more reason so to judge, because God himself, when he brought the children of Israel over Jordan, was pleased by an express command, to appoint the blessings and curses of the law to be read in a solemn manner to the whole body of the people; and that the people, at the repeating of each curse, should, by way of acknowledgment of the righteousness and reasonableness of God's judgment denounced against impenitent sinners, distinctly and solemnly say, Amen. Of this we have a large account, in this twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy; in which, from the fifteenth verse to the end, is set down a distinct denunciation of the curse or wrath of God, against several particular instances of great wickedness; and it concludes, or sums up all, with that more general denunciation in the words of the text: 'Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law' to do them; and all the people shall say, Amen.' In discoursing upon which words, because they have sometimes, by weak persons, been so misunderstood, as if by joining with or repeating this curse, men were in danger of being led into some degree of uncharitable censure, or to express any hard wish, against such persons as they know to be guilty, or whom they see live in the practice of any of those crimes to which the curse is here annexed; I shall therefore endeavour to show, first, That the repeating the curse in this and the like texts, is not expressing any uncharitable wish, or desiring that any evil should befall the persons against whom it is denounced; but only an acknowledgment of the

reasonableness of God's denouncing such threatenings, in order to bring men to repentance, and a confession of the justice and righteousness of God, in punishing such as (notwithstanding those threatenings) continue obstinately impenitent. And secondly, I shall endeavour to show, that this public acknowledgment of the righteousness of God's judgments upon impenitent sinners, is very reasonable to be made in this manner by all Christians.

I. First, I am to show, that the repeating the curse in this and the like texts, is not expressing any uncharitable wish, or desiring that any evil should befall the persons against whom it is denounced; but only an acknowledgment of the reasonableness of God's denouncing such threatenings, in order to bring men to repentance, and a confession of the justice and righteousness of God, in punishing such as (notwithstanding those threatenings) continue obstinately impenitent. And this will appear, both by a careful consideration of the words of the text itself, and by comparing them with other expressions in Scripture, of the like import and signification. In the words of the text itself, 'Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the works of this law to do them; and all the people shall say, Amen,' it is observable, in the first place, that in the very first expression, 'Cursed be he,' the word 'be,' is not in the original; and, for that reason, in our English translation, is printed in a different character: so that the words might be as truly, and indeed more truly, have been rendered, 'Cursed is he,' or 'Cursed shall he be that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them;' which is manifestly not an expression of desire, in him that pronounceth the words, but merely a declaration of

truth, that the wrath of God is actually revealed against sinners. And it is remarkable, that these very words are expressly quoted by St. Paul, from this passage in Deuteronomy, according to that latter manner of rendering: 'As many,' says he, as are of the works of the law, are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.'¹

In the next place, the same thing appears from the use of the following word, 'confirm;' 'that confirmeth not all the words of the law to do them;' for, as he who obeys the commandments of God does not add thereby any strength to the law itself, but yet is said in the text to confirm it, only by assenting to the reasonableness of it in his life and practice; so he who pronounceth those accursed, whom the law of God hath expressly condemned, doth neither thereby take upon himself any power of passing censure on his brethren; neither doth he express any wish or desire of his own; but only makes confession of the justice and righteousness of God, in declaring his indignation against sinners.

Lastly, As to the following words, 'and all the people shall say, Amen;' it is to be observed, that this phrase has in Scripture two significations. At the conclusion of prayers and thanksgivings, it signifies a wish or desire,—So be it; but when it is added to an assertion or declaration of truth, it signifies only an acknowledgment of the truth and certainty of what is so declared. Thus, when our Saviour uses the word, 'Amen,' as he does so fre-

¹ Gal. iii. 10.

quently in St. John's Gospel, it plainly signifies, as we rightly translate it, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you;' that is, the words which I speak shall certainly and assuredly be accomplished. And when St. Paul tells us, that 'all the promises of God in him are yea and amen;'¹ his meaning is evident, that they are sure, infallible, and to be entirely depended upon. And when our Saviour declares concerning himself, 'Behold, I am alive for evermore, amen,'² it is manifest the word, 'amen,' does not there express any wish or desire, (which would have been very improper in that place,) but it is a strong assertion of the infallibility of that truth, that he is 'alive for evermore.' And the character by which the Spirit describes him, 'these things saith the Amen,'³ is distinctly explained in the words next following, 'the faithful and true witness.' From these uses of the word 'amen,' in Scripture, it appears very clearly, that if the former part of the text be rendered, (as it may well be,) not 'cursed be he,' but 'cursed is he, that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them;' the meaning of the latter part, 'and let all the people say, 'Amen,' will be this only: let the people publicly profess their acquiescence in, and acknowledgment of, the justice and righteousness of the divine threatenings. And this sense of the words is the more certain, because in the book of Jeremy, where the words of the text are again repeated, 'cursed be (or Cursed is) the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant,'⁴ the prophet immediately replies, 'Then answered I,

¹ 2 Cor. i. 20.² Rev. i. 18.³ Ib. iii. 14.⁴ Jer. xi. 3.

and said, Amen, O Lord.'¹ Which reply being made by him of his own accord, and without any command, shows plainly that the word 'amen' ought not there to have been rendered, as in the form of a severe condemnatory prayer, 'so be it;' but as a form of acquiescence only in God's righteous sentence: 'Even so, O Lord, righteous and true are thy judgments.'

And thus much, from the consideration of the expressions used in the text itself. The same thing will appear further, by comparing these with other ways of speaking used in the Scripture, of the like import and signification. In the last words that Jacob spake to his sons, we find this expression concerning Simeon and Levi, 'Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel.'² It cannot be imagined that Jacob intended to curse his sons, or bring any imprecation upon them, as of his own desire; but the words are only a declaration of what he was inspired to foresee would come upon them hereafter: and therefore in the very same verse he changes his style, and goes on in the prophetic manner of speaking; not, 'Do thou divide them,' but, 'I will,' says he, 'divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.' And this (especially if we consider that it was to take place, not so much in themselves as in their posterity) leads us to the true explication of those many passages in the Psalms, which in our translation seem to be expressed in the form of curses, or imprecations, but in the original are plain predictions only of future events. To give one instance out of many: 'Let his days be few,

¹ Jer. xi. 5.

² Gen. lxix. 7.

and let another take his office; let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.'¹ These words being spoken by the Psalmist, not as a private person, concerning his own particular enemies, but as a prophet, concerning him who was to betray our Lord, are plainly, not an imprecation, but a prediction: and almost all the like expressions in the whole book of Psalms, carry with them sufficient marks of their being intended only as prophetic denunciations of the wrath of God, against profane men and enemies of religion, in all future generations. Again: when Moses commanded six of the tribes to stand upon Mount Gerizim, to bless the people, it is added in the next verse, that the other six should stand upon Mount Ebal, to curse:² he does not continue to speak in the same phrase, that as the one were to bless the people, so the other should curse the people; but only that they should stand upon Mount Ebal, to curse; that is, to publish aloud the denunciation of God's wrath against sinners, and the threatenings of what calamities would certainly befall that nation, if they departed from God. And this is what Moses himself often did, in a more vehement manner, and with more solemn words, than when it was expressed barely in the form of a curse: 'When you shall corrupt yourselves, and do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger; I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land:'³ and 'If thou forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, I testify against

¹ Psalm cix. 8. ² Deut. xxvii. 12.

³ Deut. iv. 25.

you this day, that ye shall surely perish.’¹ From this form of expression, which is really much more vehement and emphatical than that in the text, and yet manifestly contains nothing of imprecation in it, but merely a warning to deter men from apostacy; it is evident that the words of the text, though expressed in the form of an imprecation, yet must of necessity be understood in no other sense, than as a like warning to deter men from sin. And this is the more evident, because both from the places now cited, and from the whole book of Deuteronomy, it appears, that all the curses in that book were denounced not only against wicked persons then present, but also in all succeeding generations; with respect to whom, it is plain they could be understood no otherwise than as comminatory exhortations. For as the apostle declares concerning the blessing, that the promise was, ‘to them and to their children, and to them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call,’² so Moses expressly declares concerning the curse, likewise, ‘Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day, and also with him that is not here with us this day; for when thou shalt beget children, and children’s children, and shalt have remained long in the land; and it come to pass that one heareth the words of this curse, and despiseth it, the Lord will not spare that man, but all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him.’³ The meaning is evident: if any man despises the

¹ Deut. viii. 19.² Acts, ii. 39.³ Deut. xxix. 14, 15, 19; and iv. 25.

threatenings of God, instead of being moved by them to repentance, upon him shall those threatenings finally be executed.

In the New Testament, likewise, we sometimes meet with the same manner of speaking. ‘Unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.’¹ In the original, it is expressed as an entire sentence of itself,—indignation and wrath be upon them: but yet, from the whole scope of St. Paul’s discourse, it is plain his intention was nothing more, than as if he had only in one continued sentence, gone on with the foregoing declaratory manner of speaking; ‘God will render to every man according to his deeds; to them that patiently continue in well-doing, eternal life; but to them that obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.’

The apostles were entrusted by our Saviour, with the doctrine of life and death; with delivering to men the terms upon which their sins should be forgiven or not forgiven: ‘Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained:’ yet when they retained any men’s sins, as in the case of shaking off the dust of their feet against the unbelieving cities, it is plain, they did it not as an act of power, nor as a signification of any will or desire of their own, that those people should be accursed; but, as our Saviour himself expresses it, it was to be ‘for a testimony against them,’ a protestation of their unworthiness to receive the gospel:² just as Moses

¹ Rom. ii. 1. 9.

² Mark, vi. 11.

testified against the children of Israel, in the passages before cited ; and as St. Paul against certain wicked persons among the Thessalonians ; ‘ The Lord is the avenger of all such ; as we have also forewarned you, and testified ; ’¹ and as St. John, against any man that should corrupt his prophecies in the Revelation : ‘ I testify,’ saith he, ‘ unto every such person, that God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.’² From all these parallel passages it abundantly appears, that the solemnly repeating the curse in the text, or any other the like denunciations in Scripture, is not expressing any uncharitable wish, or desiring that any evil should befall the persons against whom it is denounced ; but only an acknowledgment of the reasonableness of God’s denouncing such threatenings, in order to bring men to repentance, and a confession of the justice and righteousness of God, in punishing such as (notwithstanding those threatenings) continue obstinately impenitent.

It remains that I proceed to show briefly, in the second place, that such a public acknowledgment of the righteousness of God’s judgments upon impenitent sinners, is very reasonable to be made in this manner, by all Christians. And this is extremely evident from what has been already said : for since reciting the curses written in Scripture, is not wishing, or desiring any evil to any man ; but the reason of continuing to recite them, is only the same as the reason of God’s first commanding them to be written ; namely, to move both those that hear them to repent, and to convince those that recite them of the necessity of avoiding those

¹ 1 Thes. iv. 6.² Rev. xxii. 18.

crimes, against which they acknowledge with their own mouths, the curse of God to be due; it is very plain, that this is not doing hurt, but good, to our neighbours; being, indeed, nothing else than forewarning them of a danger, in order to their escaping it. The righteousness of the law of God is attested to by the natural sense of every man's own conscience; even 'the Gentiles, which have not the law, being a law unto themselves, and showing the work of the law written in their hearts.' The judgment of God, therefore, against them who commit such things as their own consciences condemn, is according to truth;¹ that is, it is according to right and equity; as the phrase is afterwards explained;² where it is styled more expressly, 'the revelation of the righteous judgment of God:' righteous, in condemning those only, who must by all men be confessed to be worthy of death; (as St. Paul expresses it, Rom i. 32,) 'who knowing the judgment of God,' (in the original, 'the *just* judgment of God,') 'not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them;' or, (as it is found in some of the most ancient copies,) 'who knowing the righteous judgments of God, yet do not consider, that they who do such things are worthy of death, and not only they that do them themselves, but they also who countenance others that do them.' Now, what the equity of the thing itself thus compels every man's conscience secretly to acknowledge within him, the glory of God and the benefit of men make it reasonable should be publicly professed before the world; 'that God may be justified in his saying, and clear when he is judged;³ and

¹ Rom. ii. 2.² Ibid, ii. 5.³ Psalm li. 4.

that men may be moved to repent, by considering that, if they do it not, they will have no apology to make for themselves, 'but every mouth will be stopped before God.'¹ and at the day of judgment it will be said to every impenitent person, 'Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I; yea, thine own lips testify against thee;'² not, that by making such profession, any man shall be more liable to be condemned, than if he made it not; but that the righteousness of God's judgment shall be manifested in condemning men for such things only, as either they themselves professed, or (which is the same thing) could not deny, to be worthy of death. By which phrase, being worthy of death, it is not to be understood only, that such crimes may be so punished without any injustice; but also, that it is necessary, in the government of the world, that we should be so punished. God himself therefore, the infinitely good and merciful Governor of the universe, pronounces curses against the wicked, not as taking any delight so to do; but the Scripture always represents him doing it, as unwillingly, as with reluctance, and as his 'strange work.'³ And our Saviour also himself, who loved us, and gave himself for us, and laid down his own life to redeem us from death; yet, even he shall say, to those who impenitently reject his gracious offers of life, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:'⁴ and, 'in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb,' who assuredly

¹ Rom. iii. 19.² Job, xv. 6.³ Isaiah, xxviii. 21.⁴ Matt. xxv. 41.

can take no pleasure in beholding any punishment but what is necessary, 'shall they be tormented with fire and brimstone;' ¹ and the saints in heaven, who are far from having in them any revenge, or any uncharitableness, but only a right sense of the necessary administration of justice in God's kingdom, are described after the following manner: 'I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Allelujah, salvation and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication; and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.' ² And again: 'I heard the angel of the waters say, thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy: and I heard another out of the altar say, even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.' ³ The sense of all these places is nothing else, but that it is reasonable all the world should make acknowledgment of the righteousness of God's judgments; and of the necessity there is in the nature of things, and in the government of God, that wickedness should finally be destroyed. And though it be in great variety of expression, that the Scripture sets forth this truth; yet, by comparing the several expressions one with another, it is plain they all terminate only in the same thing.

What Solomon thus expresses, 'He that justi-

¹ Rev. xiv. 10.

² Ibid. xix. 10.

³ Ibid. xvi. 5.

fieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, they both are an abomination to the Lord ;'¹ is in the prophet Isaiah thus : 'Wo unto them which justify the wicked, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him ;'² and Prov. xxiv. 24, in a still more severe manner of speaking, 'He that saith unto the wicked, thou art righteous, him shall the people curse ; nations shall abhor him.'³ Yet the meaning of all these places is still evidently one and the same ; and the nations cursing such a person, plainly signifies nothing more, than an universal acknowledgment of the reasonableness and necessity of the threatenings denounced of God against him. In the book of Habakkuk, the figure is carried still higher : 'The very stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it: Wo to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity ;'⁴ and in that pathetical expression of our Saviour, 'If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.'⁴ It is a highly figurative and very elegant manner of expressing only the reasonableness and necessity of the thing to be done. And because the design and end of all these ways of speaking in Scripture, is this only, to convince men of the necessity of coming to repentance, of reforming their manners, and of obeying the law of God ; it is therefore very evident, that as showing men the penalties threatened in human laws, is a kind and friendly office, as only giving them warning in what manner to avoid them ; so reciting, with the same intention, the

¹ Prov. xvii. 15.² Hab. ii. 11, 12.³ Isaiah, v. 23.⁴ Luke, xix. 40.

curses of God set forth in Scripture against all impenitent sinners, is likewise doing, not hurt, but good, to our neighbours.

The only inference I shall draw at this time from what has been said, and wherewith I shall conclude, is this; that if, when the general denunciations of the wrath of God against sinners are recited, there be and ought to be, a great tenderness used in applying them in particular; and the design of repeating them publicly upon solemn occasions of humiliation is, that every man may apply them seriously to his own conscience, and not that any man should judge his brother; ('for who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth;') from hence we may learn the extreme wickedness of those men's pretended Catholic religion, who presumptuously taking it for granted, that all who receive not their absurd doctrines, shall be eternally punished by God; take upon them to anticipate that unrighteous sentence, which they profanely pass in the seat of God; and destroy men's bodies for no other reason, but because they have first, with impious and antichristian uncharitableness, presumed to give judgment of condemnation against their souls. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for in her is found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that are slain upon the earth.'

SERMON III.
ON RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT.

BY BISHOP ATTERBURY.

[FRANCIS ATTERBURY was born in 1662, appointed to the Deanery of Carlisle in 1704, and to the Bishopric of Rochester in 1713. He died at Paris, in 1732.]

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S E R M O N I I I .

MATT. XIV. 23.

When he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain, apart, to pray.

IT hath been disputed, which is a state of greater perfection, the social or the solitary ; whereas, in truth, neither of these estates is complete without the other ; as the example of our blessed Lord (the unerring test and measure of perfection) informs us. His life (which ought to be the pattern of ours) was a mixture of contemplation and action, of austerity and freedom : we find him often where the greatest concourse was, in the market-places, in the synagogues, and at festival entertainments ; and we find him also retiring from the crowd into a desert, or a garden, and there employing himself in all kinds of religious exercise and intercourse with God, in fasting, meditation, and prayer. In imitation of his spotless example, we may, doubtless, lead public lives, innocently and usefully ; conversing with men, and doing good to them ; mutually sowing and reaping the several comforts and advantages of human society. But because

the pleasures of conversation, when too freely tasted, are intoxicating and dangerous ; because the temptations we there meet with are many and mighty ; and even where the spirit is willing to resist, yet the flesh is often weak ; we ought, therefore, to lessen the too great complaisance we are apt to have in such satisfactions, by fit intermissions of them ; to strengthen ourselves for such public encounters by our religious privacies ; to retire from the world sometimes, and converse with God and our own consciences ; examining the state, and fortifying the powers of our souls, in secrecy and silence : we must do as our Lord did, ‘ send the multitude away, and go up into the mountain apart to pray.’

I shall, from these words, take occasion to discourse to you, concerning the great, but much neglected duty, of religious retreats and recollection. I shall first briefly show you under what limitations I would be understood to recommend the duty ; and then, what the advantages are which arise from a devout and discreet performance of it.

I mean not to press upon you that sort of retirement, which is so much esteemed and practised in the church of Rome ; where all perfection is reckoned to consist in solitude, and no man is allowed capable of arriving at the height of virtue, who doth not strip himself of all the conveniences of life, and renounce all manner of acquaintance with the world, and the things of it. I see not wherein this state of life claims the pre-eminence over all others ; how it is founded in nature and reason ; what particular example, precept, or direction there is in the gospel, inviting us to it. John the Baptist is indeed there represented, as seques-

tering himself from human converse, and spending his time 'in the wilderness;' but as he is said to have come 'in the spirit and power of Elias,'¹ (a spirit far different from the spirit of the gospel,) and did, therefore, professedly imitate that prophet in his severe manner of life, and look, and diet, and garb, and behaviour, and doctrine; so his example belonged rather to the Mosaic state, under which he lived and taught, than to the Christian dispensation, which began where his preaching ended. Nor did even the Baptist himself propose his own practice, as a pattern to his followers: on the contrary, when the people, the publicans, and the soldiers inquired of him, 'what they should do to flee from the wrath to come,' he did not exhort them to go out of the world into the wilderness; but gave them such directions only as related to a faithful discharge of their duty in their several stations and callings: and when afterwards our Saviour began to enter on his ministry, and to appear as our Saviour, by publishing the gospel of his kingdom, we find nothing either in his actions or his doctrine, to countenance that recluse and solitary state, which some since, who would be thought best to have imitated his example and obeyed his precepts, have so zealously espoused and practised. His divine discourses were chiefly spent in pressing men to exercise those graces which adorn the sociable state: even his first sermon on the mount, to the multitude, did, in the entrance of it, recommend and enjoin a public, conspicuous, and exemplary virtue; and (with some allusion, perhaps, to that eminence on which he sat, and the com-

¹ Luke, i. 17; ix. 55.

pany which surrounded him) he then likened his disciples to 'a city set on a hill, that cannot be hid;' he commanded them to 'put their light in a candlestick, not under a bushel; and so to make it shine before men, that they, seeing their good works, might glorify their Father which is in heaven.'¹

Far be it from me, however, to condemn all those good and holy persons who have betaken themselves to this solitary and austere course of living. Doubtless, many of them were actuated by a sincere, but misguided principle of piety; the fruits of which, though mixed with a great alloy of superstition, did yet, in divers respects, redound to the credit of religion, and the good of mankind. But supposing these to be real, yet they were, I say, uncommanded instances of virtue; not possible, or, if possible, not fit to be practised by the far greater part of Christians. The retreat, therefore, which I am speaking of, is not that of monks and hermits, but of men living in the world, and going out of it for a time, in order to return into it; it is a temporary, not a total retreat; such as we may leave off, or resume at pleasure, according as we have need of it, or an opportunity for it; such as is consistent with all the business, and even with the innocent pleasures of life; and is so far from interfering with the duties of our public offices and stations, that it disposes and enables us for the better discharge of them. It is this sort of retreat which may properly be made the matter of general exhortation from the pulpit, because it is really matter of general obligation to every good and sincere Christian.

¹ Matt. v. 14, 15, 16.

No man is, or ought to be, so deeply immersed in the affairs of this world, as not to be able to retire from them now and then into his closet, there to mind the concerns of another. Every day of his life, early or late, some moments he may and must find to bestow this way : the Lord's-day, particularly, is a great opportunity of this kind, which can never wholly be neglected without indevotion, or even without scandal. And such also is the annual season of recollection, in which we are. At such times as these, either when the labours and ordinary occupations of life cease, or when public diversions and entertainments are forbidden ; then every one, the noble and the mean, the wealthy and the poor, hath it certainly in his power, if it be but in his heart, to retire—to step aside from the hurry and vanities of life, and all the allurements of sense, and to examine, improve, and to enjoy himself in private.

That we may be all excited so to do, I shall proceed, in the next place, to represent to you the several advantages attending this religious practice ; whether we consider it, as a means of effacing the ill impressions made on our minds in daily conversation, or as an opportunity of pursuing further degrees of perfection, and abounding in all the methods of spiritual improvement.

The advantages of the first kind, which it affords us, are plainly such as these : that it unites and fixes our scattered thoughts ; places us out of the reach of the most dangerous temptations ; frees us from the insinuating contagion of ill examples ; and hushes and lays asleep those troublesome passions, which are the great disturbers of our repose and happiness.

A dissipation of thought is the natural and unavoidable effect of our conversing much in the world ; where we cannot help squandering away a great deal of our time upon useless objects, of no true worth in themselves, and of no real concern to us. We roll on in a circle of vain empty pleasures, and are delivered over continually from one slight amusement to another ; ever seemingly very busy, and ever really very idle ; applying ourselves without respite to that, which it becomes us most to neglect, and utterly neglectful of that one thing necessary, which it becomes and behoves us most to pursue. This gives us by degrees such a levity and wantonness of spirit, as refuses admittance to all serious thoughts, and renders us incapable of reflection ; makes our closet a terrible place to us, and solitude a burden. To retrieve ourselves from this vain, uncertain, roving, distracted way of thinking and living, it is requisite to retire frequently, and to converse much with (what we above all things love, and yet above all things hate to converse with) ourselves ; to inure our minds to recollection, to fix them on the greatest and most concerning objects, those which religion suggests, and which will, by their importance, deserve, and engage, and command our attention ; till the busy swarm of vain images, that besets us, be thoroughly dispersed, and the several scattered rays of thought, by being thus collected together, do by little and little warm our frozen hearts, and at last produce an holy flame.

The expedience of retirement is yet greater, as it removes us out of the way of the most pressing and powerful temptations that are incident to human nature. We all know by experience, that these

meet us most frequently and affect us most strongly in society; where our senses, the great inlets of temptation, are most awakened, and tempting objects, by their number and nearness, make the most vivid and lasting impressions upon us. Indeed, there is no place, no state or scene of life, that hath not its proper and peculiar temptations; even solitude itself is not without them; but they are few and faint, in comparison with those to which our appearance on the great stage of the world exposes us; and, whenever they attack us in our recesses, they do, or may, find us prepared, and upon our guard; we are then at leisure to encounter them, and have helps near at hand, which, if made use of, will enable us to decline or baffle them. Whereas, in public, we are merely passive to such impressions; which strike our minds so violently, and succeed each other so fast, that we have no opportunity, no strength, no inclination almost to withstand them.

The great risk which virtue runs in company is from the neighbourhood of ill examples, which are of so contagious a nature, that if we live much amongst them we shall as surely be corrupted by them, as he that often breathes in ill air will at last partake of the infection. It is dangerous for the most innocent person in the world to be too frequently and nearly a witness to the commission of vice and folly. Such views lessen the natural horror we have for such actions, and render the thoughts of them more familiar and less displeasing to us. Especially when we are used to see ill things practised by persons whom we regard; the favourable opinion we have of the doer extends

itself to the action done, and leads us insensibly from seeing to approving, and from approving to imitating. And thus being (the very best of us) prone to do evil, and living in the midst of evil; being attacked thus from without, and betrayed from within; we are not capable of making an effectual resistance: the only refuge we have is in retreat, where we may at leisure correct the ill impressions that have been made upon us, and by disuse and distance weaken the force of those pernicious influences which we could not wholly avoid.

Another advantage which retirement affords us is, that it calms and composes all the passions; those especially of the tumultuous kind; which, while the business and pleasures of life possess our hearts, are under a restless and violent agitation. We seldom mix long in conversation, without meeting with some accident that ruffles and disturbs us; somewhat that plays either upon our hopes or our fears, our aversions or desires. An injurious or slighting word is thrown out, which we think ourselves obliged to resent; or some innocent expression of ours is misinterpreted and resented by others, and that provokes a return. Our enemy comes in our way, and kindles thoughts of aversion and hatred in us; we look upon those who are above us in all the advantages of life with envious eyes, and with contempt on those who are beneath us. Thus are we delivered over from passion to passion, tossed and disquieted in our minds, during the intercourse we maintain with the world. But when we quit it and retire, all these winds are presently laid, and there is a perfect calm. The ob-

jects which excite us being removed, our appetites also languish and die away; we possess our souls in patience and peace, and enjoy a profound tranquillity and rest, the pleasure of which is great to those who are so happy as to have a relish for it; and is enhanced by being always tasted with innocence.

Wouldst thou then be free from envy and scorn, from anger and strife, fly from the occasions of them; steal away from the great scene of passion and business into thy privacy, shut the doors about thee, 'commune with thine own heart in thy chamber, and be still.'¹ There all animosities are forgotten, all pursuits, all competition cease; there all marks of distinction are laid aside; the great and the lowly, the prince and the subject, are upon the level; equally under the eye of one common Master, equally desirous of pleasing him, and mindless of lesser interests and concerns. There the vanities and vexations of this world are shut out, and the considerations of another are let in; and our soul enjoys that sweet contentment and repose which it enjoys nowhere else on this side heaven.

I have hitherto considered the usefulness of religious retreat, with respect to some ill impressions made upon us in conversation, which it removes:—I shall now consider it as productive of the chief Christian graces and virtues, inasmuch as it affords us the best opportunity of knowing God and ourselves, and of taking all the proper methods to reconcile and approve ourselves to God, which are consequent upon such a knowledge. For though

¹ Psalm iv. 4.

it be expedient for every rank and order of men, yet it is more particularly advantageous to penitents, to 'go up' with our Saviour 'into the mountain, apart, to pray.'

It is our duty and our privilege, our chief honour and happiness, to be 'acquainted with God;'¹ and this acquaintance can never be made, but where we divest ourselves of all other acquaintance—in our closets. When we have called off our thoughts from worldly pursuits and engagements, then (and not till then) are we at liberty to fix them on the best, the most deserving, and desirable of objects—God; to study his blessed nature and perfections; to imprint a filial awe of him on our hearts, a lively sense of his perpetual inspection and presence; to abound in all the methods of devout application to him, in acts of petition and praise, of joy and wonder, of submission and hope, of love and affiance; to open all our wants and impart all our griefs to him, and to express, in the most significant manner we are able, our entire and unlimited dependence upon him; till, by often dwelling on such thoughts and reflections as these, we have made them familiar, habitual, and natural to us; and can have as easy and delightful a recourse to God, in all accidents and upon all occasions, as a son hath to a beloved and loving parent, who he knows is at all times able to assist and ready to receive him: in a word, till we can look up to God, in each step of our conduct, as the supreme end and guide of all our actions, the fixed centre of all our wishes, desires, and designs; till we bring ourselves to love nothing in competition with him, nothing but in order to

¹ Job. xxii. 21.

the enjoyment of him ; and resolve to do nothing, and be nothing, but what we are sure will please him.

Can any thing refine, raise, or ennoble our natures more than such a conversation as this, which is thus begun, improved, and perfected in solitude ? Shall we not think it worth our while to cease, for a time, from cultivating useless and perishing friendships with men, that we may be the more at leisure and the better qualified to enter into this divine correspondence, which is of the vastest concern to us, and upon which our everlasting welfare depends ?

While, indeed, our hearts are deeply engaged in the concerns of this world, we cannot well relish the pleasures of such a spiritual commerce ; but, after we have once accustomed and inured ourselves to it, we shall find it the most delightful entertainment of the mind of man, pleasing as light to the eyes, ‘ sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.’ Sensual men may make sport with such a pretence, and call it enthusiasm, and the product of an heated imagination ; but they, that taste the satisfaction, know it to be real, and would not part with it for all the delights this world can afford ; and which (in the disparaging phrase of the apostle) they ‘ count but as dung, in comparison of the excellency of this knowledge of God and Christ Jesus.’¹

As religious retirement is a great means of advancing us in the knowledge of God, so doth it assist us towards attaining a true knowledge of ourselves ; towards searching and trying all our

¹ Phil. iii. 8.

ways, and getting a right information concerning the state of our consciences. He that will thrive in his temporal affairs must often balance his accounts, examine his gains and losses, and see what proportion they bear to each other; consider where his conduct may have been faulty in any respect, and how for the future to rectify it. The same vigilance and care is requisite in relation to our spiritual concerns also; and we can never exert it effectually but in the closet, where privacy and silence befriend our enquiries. When the importunity of outward objects ceases, when the noise and avocations of a troublesome world are at a distance, we may enter upon these searches without difficulty, and finish them without interruption. We may then look inwards, and take a distinct view of what at other times passes there unobserved; of our hidden inclinations and aversions; of those springs which secretly move us in all our pursuits; of the temptations that beset us hardest, and most frequently foil us; of the ground that we have lost or got in our several encounters. And when we are advanced thus far in the knowledge of ourselves, and of our ruling sins and infirmities, we have taken the most useful and necessary step towards abounding in the three great duties of the penitent, contrition, resolution, and prayer.

Contrition is an holy grief, excited by a lively sense, not only of the punishment due to our guilt, (that the schools call attrition,) but likewise of the infinite goodness of God, against which we have offended; accompanied with a detestation of our sin, and of ourselves, for the sake of it. At this

act of the mind, repentance (properly speaking) begins; and this godly concern of heart is rarely attained (to be sure, it can never be duly exerted and improved) but in private. And, therefore, in the story of St. Peter, we may observe that, as soon as a conviction of his guilt had seized him, it is said, ‘ he went out, and wept bitterly :’¹ he withdrew into a secret place, where he might mourn his own fall with freedom ; where he might feed, and raise up to a due height, the inward anguish he felt, and indulge himself in all the expressions of sincere sorrow. The wounds of conscience, like other wounds, though generally received in public, must always be healed in private : there they may be laid open and searched to the bottom ; there the raging smart of them is best endured, and there suitable remedies are most easily and most usefully applied ; where leisure and rest, silence and a proper discipline, assist the patient and promote the cure.

The next step to contrition, is resolution, or a firm immutable purpose of heart, never more to allow ourselves in that transgression, which we now abominate and deplore. And, in order to the forming such a well-weighed and stable resolution, there must be a calm and clear foresight of the difficulties which may attend the execution of it, and a just computation of our own strength to bear up against them ; we must deliberately consider under what circumstances the temptation, against which we are now arming ourselves, has beset us hardest, and how, for the future, we may best decline them ; what helps and supports we

¹ Matt. xvi. 57

have by experience found most useful, and how, in the day of trial, we may be secure of them; to what a broken, dispirited state of mind we have already reduced ourselves, by so often and lightly departing from what we had proposed; and, with how much greater difficulty, every time that we give way, we recover our ground. I need not prove to you, that these, and the like reflections, which are necessary towards our resolving well and wisely, can never be dwelt on, in all their due compass and force, but at leisure, and in sacred retirement. Doubtless, the good Psalmist had been some time in his closet and on his knees, when he uttered those emphatical words, ‘I have sworn, and am stedfastly purposed, to keep thy righteous judgments.’¹

But of all the duties of the penitent, that which privacy best qualifies us for is prayer,² which it enables us to perform in such a manner as is likely to be most prevalent and effectual. Great indeed is the excellence and advantage of public devotions, as they testify our common reverence of the divine Being; as they are best fitted to implore, or

¹ Psalm cxix. 100.

² Τίνος ἕνεκεν εἰς τὸ ὄρος ἀναβαίνει; παιδεύων ἡμᾶς ὅτι κάλον ἡ ἔρημία καὶ ἡ μόνωσις ὅτ’ ἂν ἐντυγχάνειν δέη τῷ Θεῷ. Διὰ τῆτο συνεχῶς εἰς τὰς ἐρημους ἄπεισι, κἀκεῖ διανυκτερεύει πολλάκις ἐυχόμενος, παιδεύων ἡμᾶς καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆ καιρῆ καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆ τόπῃ θηρᾶσθαι ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς ἀταραξίαν· ἡσυχίας γὰρ μήτηρ ἡ ἔρημος, καὶ γαλήνη, καὶ λιμὴν ἀπάντων ἀπαλλάττεσα θορύβων ἡμᾶς.—“Our Lord’s going up into the mountain was designed to teach us the advantage of solitude in our converse with God. He continually withdraws to lonely places, and there often passes the night in prayer, for the purpose of instructing us to seek an undisturbed time and place for our devotions; for retirement is the parent of tranquillity, and the haven where we find shelter from the noise and tumult of the world” Chrysost. in Matt. xiv.

acknowledge public blessings, and as they excite a public emulation in the breasts of sincere worshippers. However, in some respects, they must yield the pre-eminence to closet-prayer; particularly in this, that they are not so well calculated as that, to procure ease and repose of conscience to the sinner, and to adjust particular accounts between God and our souls. For it is of special use to this purpose, in these three respects; as it affords us the best opportunity of being fixed, fervent, and circumstantial in our addresses to God.

In the solemn service of the sanctuary, let us endeavour never so much to prevent distractions, we shall now and then be sensible of them: outward objects will break in upon our senses, and divert the application of our minds; even the length of the offices, and the daily return of the same forms, will, to persons not rightly qualified and disposed, occasion spiritual languors and wanderings. And this is not the case only of stated forms: the same inconvenience doth, in a much higher degree, belong to unpremeditated prayer; the hearers of which must first judge of the fitness, both of the matter and the expression, before they can reasonably join in what they hear. And thus the novelty of the phrase, instead of fixing, breaks and divides the attention of a sincere worshipper; his curiosity, indeed, may be awakened by this means, but his devotion is certainly checked and suspended.

Now these obstacles are all removed, these inconveniences are prevented, when we pray in private. We are then placed immediately under the eye of God, which awes us; but under no other eye, and in the neighbourhood of no other ob-

jects, which might divert or discompose us: we are at liberty to employ that part of our time in the performance of this service, when we find ourselves best disposed for it; to make choice of our own thoughts and our own words; such as are best suited to our present necessities and desires; and what is thus passing within ourselves, we cannot but perceive and attend to: we may break off from the duty, whenever we find our attention flags, and return to it at a more seasonable opportunity.

Nor are we capable, at such times, of being more fixed only, but likewise more fervent and inflamed. True religion is ever modest and reserved in its demeanour, when it appears in public; jealous of doing any thing that may savour of vanity and ostentation; unwilling to allow itself in any such earnestness of speech, or singularity of behaviour, as may call off the eyes and ears of others to observe them: it contents itself, for the most part, with a composed and serious look, with a simple and unaffected carriage. But, when public regards and restraints are taken off, the pious soul may then let itself loose into the highest fervours of zeal, into the freest raptures of thought, and into a suitable vehemence and warmth of expression: there is no sort of holy address, which it is not then allowed to make use of; no outward signs of devotion and reverence, which it may not decently abound in.

There is yet another great advantage that attends our private devotions; they give us leave to be as express and particular as we please in our representations. In the church, the sinner and the saint, men of all ranks, distinction, and attainments in

virtue, must join in the same common forms : and though each of them may, by a sudden glance of mind, adapt the general words to his own circumstances, yet one branch of the service presses too fast upon another, to admit of any pause between them. And they, therefore, who lie under the load of any particular guilt, rise not from their knees with so much comfort, as they would have done, had they been at liberty to dwell upon it, and confess it in all its aggravations. This liberty, their closet, and that alone, can afford them. There they may expatiate as much as they please upon their wants and unworthiness : there they may pour out all their complaints to God, and lay open all their griefs and fears, and send up all their thanks and acknowledgments : there importunities are not forbidden, repetitions are not unbecoming ; but they may persist knocking till it is opened to them, and asking till they have obtained.

These are some of the many spiritual advantages, which the present hours of holy recollection, when well employed, will be sure to afford us. And God grant, that all of us may, as we have opportunity and leisure, so employ them !

Indeed, the greater our sphere of public action is, the less time we can allow ourselves to spend in these religious exercises ; but still some of it is due to them, nor can any secular cares or avocations whatsoever wholly excuse us from paying it. Our blessed Lord, we are sure, had very great business to transact with mankind, and a very short time in which to finish it ; and yet, during his three years' conversation on earth, we find him often exchanging the duties of the active and public state, for those of the solitary and private,—‘ sending the

multitudes away, and going up into the mountain, apart, to pray.' And we are sure, that in this, as well as other respects, he 'left us an example, that we should follow his steps.'

To him, together with the Father and the blessed Spirit, three persons and one God, be ascribed all majesty, dominion, and power, now and for evermore.—*Amen.*

' 2 Peter, ii. 21.

SERMON IV.
ON MORTIFICATION.

BY BISHOP HALL.

[Joseph Hall was born in 1574. In 1627 he was made bishop of Worcester
whence, in 1641, he was translated to Norwich. Died 1656.]



S E R M O N I V .

GAL. II. 20.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live.

HE that was once tossed in the confluence of two seas,¹ was once no less straitened in his resolutions betwixt life and death.² Neither doth my text argue him in any other case here: as there he knew not whether he should choose, so here he knew not whether he had. 'I am crucified,' there he is dead; yet 'I live,' there he is alive again: 'yet not I,' there he lives not; but Christ in me,' there he more than lives. This holy correction makes my text full of wonders, full of sacred riddles. 1. The living God is dead upon the cross, 'Christ crucified.' 2. St. Paul who died by the sword, dies on the cross. 3. St. Paul who was not Paul till after Christ's death, is yet crucified with Christ. 4. St. Paul thus crucified yet lives. 5. St. Paul lives not himself, whilst he lives. 6. Christ who is crucified, lives in Paul, who was crucified with him.

¹Acts, xxvii. 41.

²Phil. i. 23.

See then here, both a Lent and an Easter ; a Lent of mortification—‘ I am crucified with Christ ;’ an Easter of resurrection and life—‘ I live ; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.’ The Lent of my text will be sufficient (as proper) for this season ; wherein my speech shall pass through three stages of discourse : Christ crucified, St. Paul crucified, St. Paul crucified with Christ. In all which, your Christian patience shall as much shorten my way, as my care shall shorten the way to your patience.

Christ’s cross is the first lesson of our infancy, worthy to be our last, and all. The great doctor of the Gentiles affected not to fly any higher pitch. *Grande crucis sacramentum*, as Ambrose writes : this is the greatest wonder that ever earth or heaven yielded. God incarnate, was μέγα μυστήριον,¹ ‘ a great mystery ;’ but God suffering and dying was so much more, as death is more penal than birth. The Godhead of man, and the blood of God, are two such miracles, as the angels of heaven can never enough look into, never admire enough.

Ruffinus tells us, that amongst the sacred characters of the Egyptians, the cross was anciently one, which was said to signify eternal life ; hence, their learned sort were converted to, and confirmed in the faith. Surely, we know, that in God’s hieroglyphics, eternal life is both represented and exhibited to us by the cross. That the cross of Christ was made of the tree of life ; a slip whereof the angels gave to Adam’s son, out of Paradise, is but a Jewish legend ; Galatine may believe it, not we.

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

But, that it is made the tree of life to all believers, we are sure. This is the only instrument to scale heaven; never man ascended thither, but by it. By this, Christ himself climbed up to his own glory. 'Father, glorify thy name;' that is, saith he, 'Lift me up to the tree, not of my shame, but of my triumph.' 'Behold, we preach Christ crucified,' (saith St. Paul,) 'to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness; but to them which are called, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.'¹ Foolish men, that stumble at power, and deride wisdom! Upbraid us now, ye fond Jews and pagans, with a crucified Saviour; it is our glory, it is our happiness, which ye make our reproach. Had not our Saviour died, he could have been no Saviour for us; had not our Saviour died, we could not have lived. See now the flag of our dear Redeemer, this cross, shining eminently in our foreheads; and if we had any place more high, more conspicuous, more honourable, there we would advance it. O blessed Jesu, when thou art thus lifted up on thy cross, thou drawest all hearts unto thee: there thou 'ledest captivity captive, and givest gifts unto men.' Ye are deceived, O ye blind Jews and paynims, ye are deceived. It is not a gibbet, it is a throne of honour, to which our Saviour is raised; a throne of such honour as to which heaven and earth and hell, do and must bow. The sun hides his awful head, the earth trembles, the rocks rend, the graves open, and all the frame of nature doth homage to their Lord in

¹ 1 Cor. i. 23.

this secret, but divine pomp of his crucifixion. And while ye think his feet and hands despicably fixed, behold, he is powerfully trampling upon hell and death, and setting up trophies of his most glorious victory, and scattering everlasting crowns and sceptres unto all believers. O Saviour! I do more adore thee, on the calvary of thy passion, than on the Tabor of thy transfiguration, or the Olivet of thine ascension; and cannot so feelingly bless thee for—‘Father, glorify me,’ as for—‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me: since it is no news for God to be great and glorious; but, for the eternal and ever-living God to be abased; to be abased unto death, to the death of the cross, is that which could not but amaze the angels, and confound devils; and so much more magnifies thine infinite mercy, by how much an infinite person would become more ignominious. All hosannahs of men, all allelujahs of saints and angels, come short of this majestic humiliation. ‘Blessing, honour, glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.’¹ And ye, beloved, as ever ye hope to make music in heaven, learn to tune your harps to the note and ditty of these heavenly elders. Rejoice in this, and rejoice in nothing but this cross; not in transitory honours, titles, treasures, which will at the last leave you inconsolately sorrowful, but in this cross of Christ; whereby the world is crucified to you, and you to the world. Oh! embrace this precious cross; and say with that blessed martyr, ‘My love is crucified.’² Those that have searched

¹ Rev. v. 13.² Amor meus crucifixus est.

into the monuments of Jerusalem, write that our Saviour was crucified with his face to the west; which, howsoever spitefully meant of the Jews, (as not allowing him worthy to look on the holy city and temple,) yet, was not without a mystery: 'His eyes looked to the Gentiles,' &c. saith the Psalmist. As Christ, therefore, on his cross, looked towards us sinners of the Gentiles, so let us look up to him. Let our eyes be lift up to this brazen serpent, for the cure of the deadly stings of that old serpent. See him, O all ye beholders! see him hanging upon the tree of shame, of curse, to rescue you from curse and confusion, and to feoff you in everlasting blessedness. See him stretching out his arms to receive and embrace you; hanging down his head to take view of your misery; opening his precious side to receive you into his bosom; opening his very heart to take you in thither; pouring out thence water to wash you, and blood to redeem you. O, all ye Nazarites that pass by, out of this dead lion seek and find the true honey of unspeakable and endless comfort! And ye, great masters of Israel, whose lips profess to preserve knowledge, leave all curious and needless disquisitions, and with that divine and extatical doctor of the Gentiles, care only to know—to preach—'Christ and him crucified.'

By this, though the sum of the gospel, is not the main drift of my text. I may not dwell in it, though I am loath to part with so sweet a meditation. From Christ crucified turn your eyes to Paul crucified; you have read of him dying by the sword; hear him speak of dying by the cross, and see his moral, spiritual, living crucifixion.

Our apostle is two men, Saul and Paul—the

old man and the new. In respect of the old man, he is crucified and dead to the law of sin; so as that sin is dead in him; neither is it otherwise with every regenerate. Sin hath a body, as well as the man hath, ('Who shall deliver me from this body of death?') a body that hath limbs and parts: 'Mortify your earthly members,'² saith our apostle. Not the limbs of our human body, which are made of earth; but the sinful limbs, that are made of 'corruption, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection,' &c. The head of sin is wicked devices; the heart of sin, wicked desires; the hands and feet of sin, wicked executions; the tongue of sin, wicked words; the eyes of sin, lustful apprehensions; the forehead of sin, impudent profession of evil; the back of sin, a strong supportation and maintenance of evil: all this body of sin is not only put to death, but to shame too; so as it is dead with disgrace: 'I am crucified.' St. Paul speaks not this singularly of himself, but in the person of the renewed: sin doth not, cannot, live a vital and vigorous life in the regenerate. Wherefore, then, say you, was the apostle's complaint, 'Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?'³ Mark, I beseech you, it was the body of sin, not the life of sin; a body of death, not the life of that body. Or if this body had yet some life, it was such a life as is left in the limbs when the head is struck off; some dying quiverings, rather as the remainders of a life that was, than any act of a life that is. Or, if a further life, such a one as in swoonds and fits of epilepsy, which yields breath, but not sense; or if some kind of

Rom. vii. 24.

² Colos. iii, 5.³ Ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ, κ. τ. λ.

sense, yet no motion; or if it have some kind of motion in us, yet no manner of dominion over us. What power, motion, sense, relics of life, are in a fully crucified man? Such a one may waft up and down with the wind, but cannot move out of any internal principle.

Sin and grace cannot more stand together in their strength, than life and death. In remiss degrees all contraries may be lodged together under one roof. St. Paul swears that he dies daily, yet he lives; so the best man sins hourly, even whilst he obeys; but the powerful and overruling sway of sin is incompatible with the truth of regeneration. Every Esau would be carrying away a blessing. Ye shall have strong drinkers, as Isaiah calls them.¹ 'Neighing stallions of lust,' as Jeremy calls them;² mighty hunters in oppression, as Nimrod;³ corrupt talkers;⁴ which yet will be challenging as deep a share in grace, as the most conscionable. Alas! how many millions do miserably delude themselves with a mere pretence of Christianity, *aliter vivunt, aliter loquuntur*,⁵ as was said of the philosophers. Vain hypocrites! they must know that every Christian is a crucified man. How are they dead to their sins, that walk in their sins? How are their sins dead in them, in whom they stir, reign, flourish? Who doth not smile to hear of a dead man that walks? Who derides not the solecism of that actor, that expressed himself fully dead by saying so? What a mockery is this! —eyes full of lust, itching ears, scurrilous tongues,

¹ Isaiah, v. 22.

² Jeremiah, v. 8.

³ Gen. x. 9.

⁴ Ephesians, iv. 9.

⁵ They are one sort of people in their lives, another in their professions.

bloody hands, hearts full of wickedness—and yet dead? Deceive not your souls, dear Christians, if ye love them: this false death is the way to the true, eternal, incomprehensibly woeful death of body and soul. If ye will needs do so, walk on, ye falsely dead, in the ways of your old sins; but be sure, these paths shall lead you down to the chambers of everlasting death. Away with this hateful simulation. God is not mocked; ye must either kill or die. Kill your sins, or else they will be sure to kill your souls; apprehend, arraign, condemn them; fasten them to the tree of shame; and, if they be not dead already, break their legs and arms, disable them to all offensive actions, as was done to the thieves in the gospel: so shall you say with our blessed apostle, ‘I am crucified.’

Neither is it thus only in matter of notorious crime and gross wickedness; but thus it must be in the universal carriage of our lives, and the whole habitual frame of our dispositions. In both these, we are, we must be crucified. Be not deceived, my brethren, it is a serious and severe thing to be a Christian. This work is not frolicsome, jovial, plausible: there is a certain thing called true mortification, required to this business; and whoever heard but there was pain in death? but, among all deaths, in crucifying? What a torture must there needs be in this act of violence! What a distention of the body, (whose weight is rack enough to itself!) What straining of the joints! What nailing of hands and feet! Never make account to be Christians without the hard tasks of penitence. It will cost you tears, sighs, watchings, self-restraints, self-strugglings, self-denials: this word is not more harsh than true. Ye delicate

hypocrites, what do you talk of Christian profession, when ye will not abate a dish from your table, nor spare an hour's sleep from your eyes, nor cast off an offensive rag from your backs, for your God? In vain shall the vassals of appetite challenge to be the servants of God. Were it, that the kingdom of God did consist in eating and drinking, in pampering and surfeits, in chambering and wantonness, in prancing and vanity, in talk and ostentation, O God, how rich shouldst thou be of subjects, of saints! But, if it require abstinence, humiliation, contrition of heart, subjugation of our flesh, renunciation of our wills, serious impositions of laboursome devotions, O Lord, what is become of true Christianity? Where shall we seek for a crucified man? Look to our tables, there ye shall find excess and riot: look to our backs, there ye shall find proud disguises: look to our conversations, there ye shall find scurrilous and obscene jollity. This liberty, yea, this licentiousness, is that which opens the mouths of our adversaries to the censure of our real impiety. That slander which Julian could cast upon Constantine, that *τρουφή* led him to *ἀσωτία*, delicacy to intemperance, the very same do they cast upon us: they tell us of their strict Lents, frequent fastings, canonical hours, sharp penances; of their bashful shrifts, their painful scourgings, their solitary cells, their woolward and barefoot walks, their hard and tedious pilgrimages; whilst we, they say, deny nothing to back or belly, fare full, lie soft, sit warm, and make a wanton of the flesh, while we profess to tend the spirit. Brethren, hear a little the words of exhortation: the brags of their penal will-worship shall no whit move us. All this is blown away with

a *Quis requisivit*, "Who hath required it?" Baal's priests did more than they, yet were never the holier. But for ourselves, in the fear of God, see that we do not justify their crimination; while they are in one extreme, placing all religion in the outside, in 'touch not, taste not, handle not;' let us not be in the other, not regarding the external acts of due humiliation. It is true that it is more easy to afflict the body, than to humble the soul. A dram of remorse is more than an ounce of pain. O God, if whippings, and hair-cloths, and watchings, would satisfy thy displeasure, who would not sacrifice the blood of this vassal, his body, to expiate the sin of his soul? Who would not scrub his skin, to ease his conscience? Who would not hold his eyes open, to avoid an eternal unrest and torment? But such sacrifices and oblations, O God, thou desirest not: 'The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' Yet it is as true, that it is more easy to counterfeit mortification of spirit, than humiliation of body: there is pain in the one, none in the other. He that cares not, therefore, to pull down his body, will much less care to humble his soul; and he that spares not to act meet and due penalties upon the flesh, gives more colour of the soul's humiliation. Dear Christians, it is not for us to stand upon niggardly terms with our Maker, he will have both; he that made both will have us crucified in both. The old man doth not lie in a limb or faculty, but is diffused through the whole extent of body and soul, and must be crucified in all that it is; *ὑπωπιέζω* saith the chosen vessel, 'I beat down my body;' my body as well as my spirit. Lent is wont to be a penitential time: if

ye have soundly and effectually shriven yourselves to your God, let me enjoin you a wholesome and saving penance for the whole year, for your whole life. Ye must curb your appetites, ye must fast, ye must stint yourselves to your painful devotions; ye must give peremptory denials to your own wills; ye must put your knife to your throat in Solomon's sense. O remember the quarrel against damned Dives: he fared sumptuously every day; he made neither Lents nor embers; *αἰεν ἑορτή*, as he said, every day was gaudy and festival, in rich suits, in dainty morsels, and full draughts, *intus mulso, foris oleo*, "wine within, oil without;" now all the world for a drop, and it is too little. 'Woe unto you that are full,' saith our Saviour; but even nature itself could abominate, *bis de die saturum*, "one that is full twice a day." One of the sins of our Sodom is fullness of bread. What is the remedy? It is an old word, "that hunger cures the diseases of gluttony." O that my words could prevail so far with you, beloved Christians, as to bring austere abstinence and sober moderation into fashion. The court and city have led the way to excess; your example shall prescribe, yea, administer the remedy. The heathen man could say, "He is not worthy of the name of a man that would be a whole day in pleasure;"¹—what, and we always? 'In fasting often,' saith St. Paul; what, and we never? 'I fast twice a week,' saith the Pharisee; and we Christians, when? I speak not of Popish mock-fasts, in change, not in forbearance; in change of coarser cates of the land, for the curious dainties of the water; of the flesh

¹ Cic. de fin.

of beasts, for the flesh of fish; of untoothsome morsels for *sorbitiunculæ delicatæ*, as Jerome calls them: let me never feast, if this be fasting. I speak of a true, and serious maceration of our bodies, by an absolute refraining from sustenance; which howsoever in itself it be not an act pleasing unto God, (for well may I invert St. Paul, 'neither if we eat not, are we the better; neither if we eat, are we the worse;'¹) yet in the effect it is. The plough bears no corn, but it makes way for it; it opens the soil, it tears up the briars, and turns up the furrows. Thus doth holy abstinence: it chastises the flesh, it lightens the spirit, it disheartens our vicious dispositions, it quickens our devotion. O then, as we care to avert the heavy judgments of God from ourselves, as we desire to hand down the gospel with peace to our posterity, let each man humble himself; let each man rend his heart, with sorrow for his sins; let every man ransack his own soul and life, and offer an holy violence to all those sinful corruptions which have stirred up the God of heaven against us; and never leave till in truth of heart he can say, with our blessed apostle, 'I am crucified.'

Ye have seen Christ crucified, St. Paul crucified; see now both crucified together: 'I am crucified with Christ.' It is but a cold word this, 'I am crucified;' it is the company that quickens it: He that is the life, gives it life, and makes both the word and act glorious: 'I am crucified with Christ.'

Alas! there is many a one crucified, but not with Christ. The covetous, the ambitious man, is self-crucified; he plats a crown of thorny cares for

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 8.

his own head; he pierces his hands and feet with toilsome, and painful undertakings; he drencheth himself with the vinegar and gall of discontentments; he gores his side, and wounds his heart with inward vexations: thus the man is crucified; but with the world, not with Christ. The envious man is crucified by his own thoughts; he needs no other gibbet than another man's prosperity; because another's person or counsel is preferred to his, he rushes upon his own destruction. This man is crucified, but it is Achitophel's cross, not Christ's.

The desperate man is crucified with his own distrust; he pierceth his own heart with a deep, irremediable, unmitigable, killing sorrow; he pays his wrong to God's justice with a greater wrong to his mercy, and leaps out of an inward hell of remorse to the bottomless pit of damnation. This man is crucified; but this is Judas's cross, not Christ's.

The superstitious man is professedly mortified. The answer of that hermit in the story is famous. "Why dost thou destroy thy body?" "Because it would destroy me." He useth his body, therefore, not as a servant, but a slave; not as a slave, but an enemy: he lies upon thorns, with the Pharisee; little-ease is his lodging, with Simeon the Anchorite; the stone is his pillow, with Jacob; tears his food, with exiled David; he lanceth his flesh with the Baalites; he digs his grave with his nails; his meals are hunger, his breathings sighs, his linen hair-cloth, lined and laced with cords and wires; lastly, he is his own willing tormentor, and hopes to merit heaven by self-murder. This man is crucified, but not with Christ.

The felon, the traitor, is justly crucified; the vengeance of the law will not let him live. The Jesuitical incendiary, that cares only to warm himself by the fires of states and kingdoms, cries out of his sufferings:—the world is too little for the noise of our cruelty, and their patience, whilst it judgeth of our proceedings by our laws, not by our executions. But if they did suffer what they falsely pretend, they might be crucified, but not with Christ; they should bleed for sedition, not conscience. They may steal the name of Jesus, they shall not have his society: this is not Christ's cross, it is the cross of Barabbas, or the two malefactors (*τῶν συσασιασῶν*¹). All these, and many more, are crucified, but not, as St. Paul was here, 'with Christ.' How must we be crucified with Christ? in partnership, in person: in partnership of the suffering—every particularity of Christ's crucifixion is reacted in us. Christ is the model, we the metal: the metal takes such form as the model gives it; so are we spread upon the cross of Christ, in an answerable extension of all parts, to die with him, as the prophet was upon the dead child, to revive him. Superstitious men talk of the impression of our Saviour's wounds in their idol, St. Francis. This is nothing new; St. Paul, and every believing Christian hath both the lashes, and wounds, and transfixions of his Jesus wrought upon him. The crown of thorns pierces his head, when his sinful conceits are mortified; his lips are drenched with gall and vinegar, when sharp and severe restraints are given to his tongue; his hands

¹ Mark xv. 7

and feet are nailed, when he is by the power of God's Spirit disabled to the wonted courses of sin; his body is stripped, when all colour and pretences are taken away from him; shortly, his heart is pierced, when the life-blood of his formerly reigning corruptions are let out. He is no true Christian that is not thus crucified with Christ.

Woe is me! how many fashionable ones are not so much as pained with their sins: it is no trouble to them to blaspheme, oppress, debauch. Yea, rather it is a death to them to think of parting with their dear corruptions. The world hath bewitched their love. That which Erasmus saith of Paris, that after a man hath acquainted himself with the odious scent of it, *hospitibus magis ac magis adlubescit*, 'it grows into his liking more and more,' is too true of the world, and sensual minds: alas! they rather crucify Christ again, than are crucified with Christ. Woe to them that ever they were; for being not dead with Christ, they are not dead in Christ; and being not dead in Christ, they cannot but die eternally in themselves; 'For the wages of sin is death:' death in their person, if not in their surety. Beloved, let us not think it safe for us to rest in this miserable and deadly condition. As ye love your souls, give no sleep to your eyes, nor peace to your hearts, till ye find the sensible effects of the death and passion of Christ your Saviour within you, mortifying all your corrupt affections, and sinful actions, that ye may truly say with St. Paul, 'I am crucified with Christ.'

Six several times do we find that Christ shed blood: in his circumcision—in his agony—in his crowning—in his scourging—in his affixion—in his

transfixion. The instrument of the first was the knife; of the second, vehemence of passion; of the third, the thorns; of the fourth, the whips; of the fifth, the nails; of the last, the spear. In all these we are, we must be, partners with our Saviour.

In his circumcision, when we draw blood of ourselves by cutting off the foreskin of our filthy (if pleasing) corruptions.¹

In his agony, when we are deeply affected with the sense of God's displeasure for sin, and terrified with the frowns of an angry Father.

In his crowning with thorns, when we smart and bleed with reproaches for the name of Christ; when that which the world counts honour is pain to us, for his sake; when our guilty thoughts punish us, and wound our restless heads, with the sad remembrance of our sins.

In his scourging, when we tame our wanton and rebellious flesh, with wise rigour and holy severity.

In his affixion, when all the powers of our souls and parts of our body are strictly hampered, and unremovably fastened upon the royal commandments of our Maker and Redeemer.

In his transfixion, when our hearts are wounded with divine love, (with the spouse in the Canticles,) or our consciences with deep sorrow.

In all these we bleed with Christ, and all these (save the first only) belong to his crucifying. Surely, as it was in the old law, *χωρὶς αἱματεκχυσιας*, without blood shed there was no remission;² so it is still, and ever, in the new. If Christ had not thus bled for us, there had been no remission; if we do not thus bleed with Christ, there is for us no remission.

There is no benefit, where is no partnership. If Christ therefore bled with his agony, with his thorns, with his whips, with his nails, with his spear, in so many thousand passages, as tradition is bold to define; and we never bleed, either with the agony of our sorrow for sin, or the thorns of holy cares for displeasure, or the scourges of severe Christian rigour, or the nails of holy constraint, or the spear of deep remorse, how do we, how can we for shame, say, we are 'crucified with Christ?'

St. Austin, in his epistle, or book rather, to Honoratus, gives us all the dimensions of the cross of Christ.¹ The latitude he makes in the transverse; this (saith he) pertains to good works, because on this his hands were stretched. The length was from the ground to the transverse, this is attributed to his longanimity, and persistance; for on that his body was stayed, and fixed. The height was in the head of the cross, above the transverse; signifying the expectation of supernal things. The depth of it was in that part, which was pitched below within the earth, importing the profoundness of his free grace, which is the ground of all his beneficence. In all these must we have our part with Christ: in the transverse of his cross, by the ready extension of our hands to all good works of piety, justice, charity. In the arrectary, or beam of his cross, by continuance, and uninterrupted perseverance in good. In the head of his cross, by a high elevated hope, and looking for of glory. In the foot of his cross, by a lively and firm faith, fastening our souls upon the affiance of his free grace and mercy. And

¹ Epist. 129, ad Honoratum.

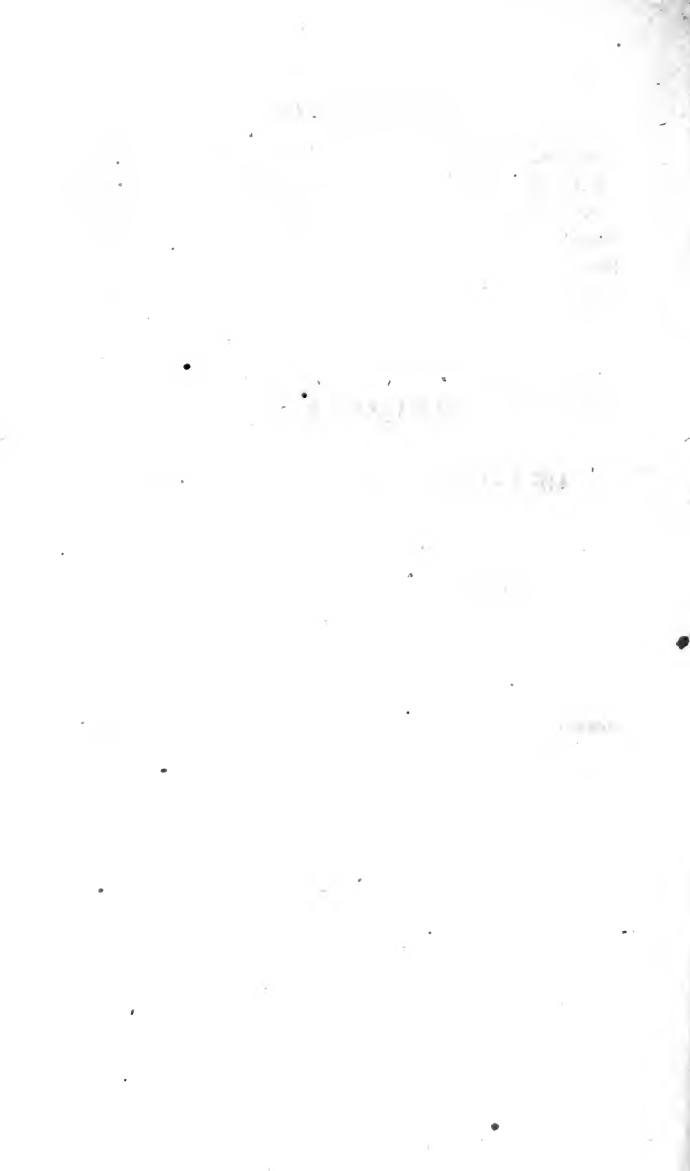
thus shall we be crucified with Christ, upon his own cross.

Yet, lastly, we must go further than this, from his cross to his person.

So did St. Paul, and every believer, die with Christ, that he died in Christ; for, as in the first Adam we all lived, and sinned; so in the second, all believers died, that they might live.

The first Adam brought in death to all mankind; but, at last, actually died for none but himself. The second Adam died for mankind, and brought life to all believers. Seest thou thy Saviour, therefore, hanging upon the cross? all mankind hangs there with him, as a knight or burgess of parliament voices his whole borough, or country. What speak I of this? The members take the same lot with the head. Every believer is a limb of that body; how can he, therefore, but die with him, and in him? That real union, then, which is betwixt Christ and us, makes the cross and passion of Christ ours; so as the thorns pierced our heads, the scourges blooded our backs, the nails wounded our hands and feet, and the spear gored our sides and hearts; by virtue whereof, we receive justification from our sins, and true mortification of our corruptions. Every believer, therefore, is dead already for his sins, in his Saviour; he needs not fear that he shall die again. God is too just to punish twice for one fault; to recover the sum both of the surety and principal. All the score of our arrearages is fully struck off, by the infinite satisfaction of our blessed Redeemer. Comfort thyself, therefore, thou penitent and faithful soul, in the confidence of thy safety. Thou shalt not die, but live, since thou art already crucified with thy

Saviour. He died for thee, thou diedst in him. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies! Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, and lives gloriously at the right hand of God; making intercession for us.' To thee, O blessed Jesu, together with thy coeternal Father, and Holy Spirit, three persons in one infinite, and incomprehensible Deity, be all praise, honour, and glory, now and for ever.—*Amén.*



SERMON V.
OF CONFESSION, AND SORROW
FOR SIN.

BY ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

[JOHN TILLOTSON was born in 1630. He was elevated to the Archiepiscopal see of Canterbury in 1691 ; and died, 1694.]



S E R M O N V.

PSALM XXXVIII. 18.

I will declare mine iniquity, and be sorry for my sin.

IN this Psalm David does earnestly beg mercy and forgiveness of God, and in order to the obtaining of it, he declares both his sins and his repentance for them, in these words, which contain in them two of the necessary ingredients, or at least concomitants of a true repentance, viz. confession of sin, and sorrow for it.

I shall speak something of the first of these, viz. confession of sin: but the second, viz. sorrow for sin, shall be the main subject of my discourse.

I. Confession of sin: 'I will declare mine iniquity,' or, as it is in the old translation, 'I will confess my wickedness.' Of which I shall speak under these three heads:—

I. What confession of sin is.

II. How far it is necessary.

III. What are the reasons and grounds of this necessity.

I. What confession of sin is. It is a declaration or acknowledgment of some moral evil or fault to another, which we are conscious to ourselves we

have been guilty of. And this acknowledgment may be made by us, either to God or man. The Scripture mentions both. Confession of our sins to God is very frequently mentioned in Scripture, as the first and necessary part of repentance; and sometimes, and in some cases, confession to men is not only recommended, but enjoined.

II. How far confession of our sins is necessary. That it is necessary to confess our sins to God, the Scripture plainly declares, and is I think a matter out of all dispute. For it is a necessary part of repentance, that we should confess our sins to God, with a due sense of the evil of them; and therefore the Scripture maketh this a necessary qualification, and condition of pardon and forgiveness. 'Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy.'¹ 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;'² implying that if we do not confess our sins to God, the guilt of them will still remain; to God I say, for of confession to him St. John plainly speaks, when he says, 'He is faithful and just.' Who? God, surely; who though he be not named before, yet is necessarily understood in the words before: 'If we confess our sins,' i. e. to God, 'he is faithful and just.'

A general confession of our sins is absolutely necessary; and in some cases a particular acknowledgment of them, and repentance for them, especially if the sins have been great and deliberate and presumptuous; in this case a particular confession of them, and repentance for them, is neces-

¹ Prov. xxviii. 13.

² 1 John, i. 9.

sary, so far as we can particularly recollect them, and call them to remembrance: whereas for sins of ignorance and infirmity, of surprise and daily incursion, for lesser omissions, and the defects and imperfections of our best actions and services, we have all the reason that can be to believe, that God will accept of a general confession of them, and repentance for them. And if any man ask me, where I find this distinction in Scripture, between a general and particular repentance; I answer, that it is not necessary it should be any where expressed in Scripture, being so clearly founded in the nature and reason of the thing; because in many cases it is not possible that we should have a particular knowledge and remembrance of all our particular sins; as is plain in sins of ignorance, since our very calling them by that name, does necessarily suppose that we do not know them. It is impossible we should remember those sins afterwards, which we did not know when they were committed: and therefore either a general repentance for these and the other sins I mentioned of the like nature, must be sufficient, in order to the pardon of them; or we must say, that they are unpardonable, which would be very unreasonable, because this would be to make lesser sins more unpardonable than those which are far greater.

And yet, though this difference between a general and particular repentance be no where expressly mentioned in Scripture, there does not want foundation for it there. 'Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret sins;'¹ (i. e.) such as we do not discern and take notice of, when they are committed. And yet Da-

¹ Psalm xix. 12.

vid supposeth, that upon a general acknowledgment of them, and repentance for them, we may be cleansed from them, though we cannot make a particular acknowledgment of them, and exercise a particular repentance for them, because they are secret, and we do not particularly understand what they are.

As for our confessing our sins to men, both Scripture and reason do in some cases recommend and enjoin it. As;

1. In order to the obtaining of the prayers of good men for us. 'Confess your sins one to another;' he said before, 'the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.'¹ This in all probability is meant of the miraculous power of prayer, which St. Chrysostom reckons among the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, bestowed upon Christians in the first ages of the church. And this is very much countenanced and confirmed by what presently follows after this command of confessing our sins one to another, and praying one for another, and given as the reason of it; 'for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' The original is *δέησις ενεργουμένη*, 'the inspired prayer,' which in the verse before is called 'the prayer of faith,' meaning that miraculous faith, in the power whereof Christians did obtain of God whatever they were inspired to ask of him; according to our Saviour's promise in the gospel, concerning the efficacy of the prayers of Christians, which we find mentioned among the other miraculous powers, which were to be conferred upon them by the coming of the Holy Ghost.

2. Confession of our sins to men is likewise

¹ James, v. 16.

reasonable, in order to the ease and satisfaction of our minds, and our being directed in our duty for the future. In this case common reason and prudence, without any precept of Scripture, will direct men to have recourse to this remedy, viz. to discover and lay open our disease to some skilful spiritual physician, to some faithful friend or prudent guide, in order to spiritual advice and direction, for the peace and satisfaction of our minds. And then,

3. In case our sins have been public and scandalous, both reason and the practice of the Christian church do require, that when men have publicly offended, they should give public satisfaction, and open testimony of their repentance.

But as for private and auricular confession of our sins to a priest in all cases, and as of absolute necessity to our obtaining pardon and forgiveness from God, as the church of Rome teacheth, this is neither necessary by divine precept, nor by any constitution and practice of the ancient Christian church.

Not to mention the bad consequences of this practice, and the impious and dangerous use which hath been made of this seal of confession, for the concealing and carrying on of the most wicked and barbarous designs; and the debauching of the penitents, by drawing them into the commission of the same and greater sins, than those which they confessed; which the more devout persons of that church have frequently complained of.

I proceed now to show briefly, in the third place, the grounds and reasons of the necessity of confessing our sins to God; and I shall but just mention them.

1. From the precept and command of God; for which I have already produced clear proof of Scripture.

2. From the nature of the thing; because, without this, there can be no repentance towards God. He that will not so much as own the faults which he hath been guilty of, can never repent of them. If we will not confess our sins to God, we are never like to be sorry for them. Thus much for the first thing in the text, the confession of our sins.

I proceed now to the second ingredient of repentance mentioned in the text, which is sorrow for sin: 'I will declare mine iniquity, and be sorry for my sin.' In the handling of this argument, I shall,

I. Consider the nature of this passion of sorrow.

II. The reason and grounds of our sorrow for sin.

III. The measure and degrees of it.

IV. How far the outward expression of our inward grief by tears is necessary to a true repentance.

I. For the nature of this passion. Sorrow is a trouble or disturbance of mind, occasioned by something that is evil, done or suffered by us, or which we are in danger of suffering, that tends greatly to our damage or mischief. So that to be sorry for a thing, is nothing else but to be sensibly affected with the consideration of the evil of it, and of the mischief and inconvenience which is like to redound to us from it: which, if it be a moral evil, such as sin is, to be sorry for it, is to be troubled that we have done it, and to wish with all our hearts that we had been wiser, and had done otherwise; and if this sorrow be true and real, if it abide

and stay upon us, it will produce a firm purpose and resolution in us, not to do the like for the future.

It is true indeed, that we are said to be sorry for the death and loss of friends ; but this is rather the effect of natural affection than of our reason, which always endeavours to check and moderate our grief for that which we cannot help, and labours by all means to turn our sorrow into patience ; and we are said likewise to grieve for the miseries and sufferings of others ; but this is not so properly sorrow as pity and compassion. Sorrow rather respects ourselves, and our own doings and sufferings.

II. I proceed in the second place to inquire into the reasons and grounds of our sorrow for sin ; and they, as I have already hinted, are these two, the intrinsical, or the consequent evil of sin ; either the evil of sin in itself, or the mischiefs or inconveniences which it will bring upon us. For every one that is sorry for any fault he is guilty of, is so upon one of these two accounts ; either upon the score of ingenuousness or of interest ; either because he hath done a thing which is unworthy in itself, or because he hath done something which may prove prejudicial to himself ; either out of a principle of love and gratitude to God, or from a principle of self-love. And though the former of these be the better, the more generous principle of sorrow ; yet the latter is usually the first ; because it is the more sensible, and toucheth us more nearly : for sin is a base and ill-natured thing, and renders a man not so apt to be affected with the injuries he hath offered to God, as with the mischief which is likely to fall upon himself. And therefore, I will begin with the latter, because it is

usually the more sensible cause of our trouble and sorrow for sin.

1. The great mischief and inconvenience that sin is like to bring upon us. When a man is thoroughly convinced of the danger into which his sins have brought him; that they have made him a child of wrath, and a son of perdition, that he is thereby fallen under the heavy displeasure of Almighty God, and liable to all those dreadful curses which are written in his book, that ruin and destruction hang over him, and that nothing keeps him from eternal and intolerable torments, but the patience and long-suffering of God, which he does not know how soon it may cease to interpose between him and the wrath of God, and let him fall into that endless and insupportable misery, which is the just portion and desert of his sins;—he that lays to heart the sad estate and condition into which he hath brought himself by sin, and the mischiefs which attend him every moment of his continuance in that state, and how near they are to him, and that there is but a step between him and death, and hardly another between that and hell;—he cannot surely, but be very sorry for what he hath done, and be highly displeased and offended with himself, that he should be the author of his own ruin, and have contributed as much as in him lies to his everlasting undoing.

2. Another and better principle of sorrow for sin is ingenuousness; because we are sensible that we have carried ourselves very unworthily towards God, and have been injurious to him who hath laid all possible obligations upon us. For he hath made us, and hath given us our beings, and hath charged his watchful providence with the continual care of

us; his bounty hath ministered to the necessities and comforts of our life; all the blessings that we enjoy are the effects of his mere love and goodness, without any hope of requital, or expectation of any other return from us, than of love, of gratitude, and obedience; which yet are of no advantage to him, but very beneficial and comfortable to ourselves: for he does not expect duty and obedience from us, with any regard of benefit to himself, but for our sakes, and in order to our own happiness.

Nay, his kindness did not stop here, but after we had abused him by our repeated provocations, yet he still continued his care of us; and when we had further provoked him to withdraw his love, and to call in his abused goodness, and had done what lay in us to make ourselves miserable, he would not suffer us to be undone, but found out a ransom for us, and hath contrived a way for the pardon of all our offences, and to reconcile us to himself, and to restore us to happiness, by the most stupendous and amazing condescension of love and goodness that ever was, even by giving his only
 * Son to die for us.

And can we reflect upon all this, and not be sorry and grieved at our very hearts, that we should be so evil to him, who hath been so good to us; that we should be so undutiful to so loving a Father, so unkind to so faithful and constant a friend, so ungrateful and unworthy to so mighty a benefactor? If any thing will melt us into tears, surely this will do it, to consider that we have sinned against him who made us, and continually preserves us; and after all our unkindness to him, did still retain so great a love for us, as to redeem us from hell and destruction, by the death and suffering of

his Son ; and notwithstanding all our offences does still offer us pardon and peace, life and happiness. Such considerations as these, seriously laid to heart, should one would think break the hardest heart, and make tears to gush even out of a rock.

III. Now I, in the third place, proceed to consider the measure and degree of our sorrow for sin. That it admits of degrees which ought to bear some proportion to the heinousness of our sins, and the several aggravations of them, and the time of our continuance in them, is out of all dispute: for, though the least sin be a just cause of the deepest sorrow, yet, because our greatest grief can never bear a due proportion to the vast and infinite evil of sin, God is pleased to require and accept such measures of sorrow, as do not bear an exact correspondence to the malignity of sin, provided they be according to the capacity of our nature, and in some sort proportioned to the degree and aggravations of our sins: i. e. though the highest degree of our sorrow doth necessarily fall below the evil of the least sin, yet God requires that we should be more deeply affected with some sins than others.

But what is the lowest degree which God requires in a true penitent, and will accept, as it is impossible for me tell, so it is unprofitable for any body to know ; for no man can reasonably make this inquiry with any other design, than that he may learn how he may come off with God upon the cheapest and easiest terms. Now, there cannot be a worse sign, that a man is not truly sensible of the great evil of sin, than this, that he desires to be troubled for it as little as may be, and no longer than needs must. And none surely are more un

likely to find acceptance with God, than those who deal so nearly, and endeavour to drive so hard a bargain with him.

And therefore I shall only say this in general, concerning the degrees of our sorrow for sin; that sin being so great an evil in itself, and of so pernicious a consequence to us, it cannot be too much lamented and grieved for by us; and the more and greater our sins have been, and the longer we have continued and lived in them, they call for so much the greater sorrow, and deeper humiliation from us: for the reasoning of our Saviour concerning Mary Magdalen, 'She loved much, because much was forgiven her,' is proportionably true in this case: those who have sinned much, should sorrow the more.

And then we must take this caution along with us, that if we would judge aright of the truth of our sorrow for sin, we must not measure it so much by the degrees of sensible trouble and affliction, as by the rational effects of it, which are hatred of sin, and a fixed purpose and resolution against it for the future: for he is most truly sorry for his mis-carriage, who looks upon what he hath done amiss with abhorrence and detestation of the thing, and wisheth he had not done it, and censures himself severely for it, and thereupon resolves not to do the like again. And this is the character which St. Paul gives of a godly sorrow, that 'it worketh repentance,' *μετάνοιαν*; it produceth a real change in our minds, and makes us to alter our purpose and resolution: and though such a person may not be so passionately and sensibly afflicted for

sin, yet it appears by the effect, that he hath a deeper and more rational resentment of the evil of it, than that man who is sad, and melancholy, and drooping, for never so long a time, and after all, returns to his former sinful course; the degree of his sorrow may appear greater, but the effect of it is really less.

IV. As for the outward expressions of our grief and sorrow. The usual sign and outward expression of sorrow is tears; but these being not the substance of our duty, but an external testimony of it, which some tempers are more unapt to than others; we are much less to judge of the truth of our sorrow for sin by these, than by our inward sensible trouble and affliction of spirit. Some persons are of a more tender and melting disposition, and can command their tears upon a little occasion, and upon very short warning; and such persons that can weep for every thing else that troubles them, have much more reason to suspect the truth of their sorrow for sin, if this outward expression of it be wanting. And we find in Scripture, that the sorrow of true penitents does very frequently discover itself by this outward sign of it. Thus when Ezra and the people made confession of their sins to God, it is said, that 'they wept very sore.'¹ Peter, when he reflected upon that great sin of denying his Master, it is said, 'went forth and wept bitterly.' David also was abundant in this expression of his grief. In the book of Psalms he speaks frequently of his sighs and groans, and of 'watering his couch with his tears:' yea, so sensibly was he affected with the

¹ Ezra, x.

evil of sin, that he could shed tears plentifully for the sins of others: 'Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law.'¹ In like manner Jeremiah tells us, that 'his soul did weep in secret places,' for the pride and obstinacy of the Jews; that 'his eye did weep sore, and run down with tears.'² And so likewise St. Paul: 'There are many that walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ.'³ And there seems to be this natural reason for it, that all great and permanent impressions upon the mind, all deep inward resentments, have usually a proportionable effect upon the body, and the inferior faculties.

But though this happen very frequently, yet it is not so constant and certain. For all men have not the same tenderness of spirit, nor are equally prone to tears; nay, though a man can weep upon natural accounts, as upon the loss of a child, or near relation, or an intimate friend, or when he lies under a sharp bodily pain, yet a man may truly repent, though he cannot express his sorrow for sin the same way, provided he give testimony of it by more real effects: and therefore the rule, which is commonly given by casuists in this case, seems to be more ensnaring than true and useful; namely, "That that man that can shed tears upon account of any evil less than that of sin, (as certainly all natural evils are,) ought to question the truth of his repentance for any sin that he hath committed, if he cannot shed tears for it. This I

¹ Psalm cxix. 136.

² Jer. xiii. 17.

³ Philip. iii. 18, 19.

think is not true ; because there is scarce any man, of so hard and unrelenting a spirit, but the loss of a kind father, or a dear child, or other near relation, will force tears from him : and yet such a man, if it were to save his soul, may not be able at some times to shed a tear for his sins. And the reason is obvious ; because tears do proceed from a sensitive trouble, and are commonly the product of a natural affection ; and therefore it is no wonder, if they flow more readily and easily upon a natural account ; because they are the effect of a cause suitable to their nature. But sorrow for sin, which hath more of the judgment and understanding in it, hath not its foundation in natural affection, but in reason ; and therefore may not many times express itself in tears, though it may produce greater and more proper effects.

So that, upon the whole matter, I see no reason to call in question the truth and sincerity of that man's sorrow and repentance, who hates sin and forsakes it, and returns to God and his duty, though he cannot shed tears, and express the bitterness of his soul for his sin, by the same significations that a mother doth in the loss of her only son. He that cannot weep like a child may resolve like a man ; and that undoubtedly will find acceptance with God. A learned divine hath well illustrated this matter by this similitude. Two persons walking together espy a serpent ; the one shrieks and cries out at the sight of it, the other kills it : so it is in sorrow for sin ; some express it by great lamentation and tears, and vehement transports of passion ; others by greater and more real effects of hatred and detestation, by forsaking their sins, and by mortifying and subduing their

lusts : but he that kills it does certainly best express his inward displeasure and enmity against it.

The application I shall make of what hath been said upon this argument, shall be in two particulars.

I. By way of caution, and that against a double mistake about sorrow for sin.

1. Some look upon trouble and sorrow for sin, as the whole of repentance.

2. Others exact from themselves such a degree of sorrow as ends in melancholy, and renders them unfit both for the duties of religion, and of their particular calling. The first concerns almost the generality of men ; the latter but a very few in comparison.

1. There are a great many, who look upon trouble and sorrow for their sins, as the whole of repentance, whereas it is but an introduction to it. It is that which works repentance ; but is not repentance itself. Repentance is always accompanied with sorrow for sin ; but sorrow for sin does not always end in true repentance : sorrow only respects sins past ; but repentance is chiefly preventive of sin for the future. And God doth therefore require our sorrow for sin, in order to our forsaking of it.¹ Repentance is there called ‘repentance from dead works.’ It is not only a sorrow for them, but a turning from them.

There is no reason why men should be so willing to deceive themselves, for they are like to be the losers by it : but so we see it is, that many men are contented to be deceived to their own ruin ; and among many other ways, which men

¹ Heb vi. 1.

have to cheat themselves, this is none of the least frequent, to think that if they can but shed a few tears for sin upon a death-bed—which no doubt they may easily do, when they see their friends weeping about them, and apprehend themselves to be in imminent danger, not only of death, but of that which is more terrible, the heavy displeasure, and the fiery indignation of Almighty God, ‘into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall;’—I say, they think that if they can but do thus much, God will accept this for a true repentance, and hereupon grant them pardon and eternal life. And upon these fond hopes, they adjourn their repentance, and the reformation of their lives to a dying hour.

Indeed, if I were to speak to a man upon his death-bed, I would encourage him to a great contrition and sorrow for his sins, as his last and only remedy, and the best thing he can do at that time; but on the other hand, when I am speaking to those that are well and in health, I dare not give them the least encouragement to venture their souls upon this, because it is a hazardous, and almost desperate remedy; especially when men have cunningly and designedly contrived to rob God of the service of their lives, and to put him off with a few unprofitable sighs and tears, at their departure out of the world. Our Saviour tells us, that it is ‘not every one, that shall say unto him Lord! Lord! that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; and that there is a time, when ‘many shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able.’

The sum of this caution is, that men should take heed of mistaking sorrow for sin, for true repentance, unless it be followed with the forsaking of sin and the real reformation of our lives. Ahab

humbled himself, but we do not find that he was a true penitent. Judas was sorry for his sin, and yet for all that was 'the son of perdition.' Esau is a sad type of an ineffectual sorrow for sin, Heb. xii. where the apostle tells us, that 'he found no place for repentance;' that is, no way to change the mind of his father Isaac, though he sought it carefully with tears. If sorrow for sin were repentance, there would be store of penitents in hell; for there is the deepest and most intense sorrow, 'weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.'

2. Another mistake which men ought to be cautioned against in this matter, is of those who exact from themselves such a degree of sorrow for sin as ends in deep melancholy, as renders them unfit both for the duties of religion, and of their particular callings. But because there are but very few who fall into this mistake, I shall need to say the less to it. This only I shall say, that those who indulge their sorrow to such a degree as to drown their spirits, and to sink them into melancholy and mopishness, and thereby render themselves unserviceable to God, and unfit for the necessities of this life, they commit one sin more to mourn for, and overthrow the end of repentance by the indiscreet use of the means of it. For the end of sorrow for sin is the forsaking of it, and returning to our duty: but he that sorrows for sin, so as to unfit him for his duty, defeats his own design, and destroys the end he aims at.

II. The other part of the application of this discourse should be to stir up this affection of sorrow in us. And here, if I had time, I might represent to you the great evil of sin, and the infinite danger and inconvenience of it. If the holy men in Scrip-

ture, David, and Jeremiah, and St. Paul were so deeply affected with the sins of others, as to shed rivers of tears at the remembrance of them; how ought we to be touched with the sense of our own sins, who are equally concerned in the dishonour brought to God by them, and infinitely more in the danger they expose us to! Can we weep for our dead friends? and have we no sense of that heavy load of guilt, of that 'body of death,' which we carry about with us? Can we be sad and melancholy for temporal losses and sufferings, and 'refuse to be comforted?,' and is it no trouble to us to have lost heaven and happiness, and to be in continual danger of the intolerable sufferings, and endless torments of another world?

I shall only offer to your consideration the great benefit and advantage which will redound to us from this godly sorrow; 'it worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of,' saith St. Paul. If we would thus 'sow in tears,' we should 'reap in joy.' This sorrow would but continue for a time,' and 'in the morning of the resurrection there would be joy to all eternity, 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.' It is but a very little while, and these 'days of mourning will be accomplished;' and then 'all tears shall be wiped from our eyes; and the ransomed of the Lord shall come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted: but woe unto you that laugh, for ye shall mourn and weep.' If men will rejoice in the pleasures of sin, and 'walk in the ways of their hearts, and in the sight of their eyes;' if they will 'remove sorrow

from their heart,' and put away all sad and melancholy thoughts from them, and are resolved to harden their spirits against the sense of sin, against the checks and convictions of their own consciences, and the suggestions of God's Holy Spirit, against all the arguments that God can offer, and all the methods that God can use to bring them to repentance; let them 'know, that for all these things God will bring them into judgment;' and because they would not give way to a timely and seasonable sorrow for sin, they shall lie down in eternal sorrow, 'weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth shall be their portion for ever.' From which sad and miserable estate, beyond all imagination, and past all remedy, God of his infinite goodness deliver us all, for Jesus Christ's sake.



SERMON VI.
ON REPENTANCE.

BY BISHOP TAYLOR.

JEREMY TAYLOR was born in 1613. At the Restoration, in 1660, he was appointed to the bishopric of Down and Connor. He died in 1667.

S E R M O N VI.

JEREMIAH, XIII. 16.

Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, (or, lest while ye look for light,) he shall turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

God is the eternal fountain of honour and the spring of glory ; in him it dwells essentially, from him it derives originally ; and when an action is glorious, or a man is honourable, it is because the action is pleasing to God, in the relation of obedience or imitation, and because the man is honoured by God, and by God's vicegerent : and therefore, God cannot be dishonoured, because all honour comes from himself ; he cannot but be glorified, because to be himself is to be infinitely glorious. And yet he is pleased to say, that our sins dishonour him, and our obedience does glorify him. But as the sun, the great eye of the world, prying into the recesses of rocks and the hollowness of valleys, receives appearances or visible forms from these objects, but he beholds them only by that ligh

which proceeds from himself; so does God, who is the light of that eye; he receives reflexes and returns from us, and these he calls 'glorifications' of himself, but they are such as are made so by his own gracious acceptation. For God cannot be glorified by any thing but by himself, and by his own instruments, which he makes as mirrors to reflect his own excellency; that by seeing the glory of such emanations, he may rejoice in his own works, because they are images of his infinity. Thus when he made the beauteous frame of heaven and earth, he rejoiced in it, and glorified himself; because it was the glass in which he beheld his wisdom and almighty power. And when God destroyed the old world, in that also he glorified himself; for in those waters he saw the image of his justice,—they were the looking-glass for that attribute; and God is said 'to laugh at' and rejoice in the destruction of a sinner, because he is pleased with the economy of his own laws, and the excellent proportions he hath made of his judgments consequent to our sins. But, above all, God rejoiced in his holy Son; for he was the image of the Divinity, 'the character and express image of his person;' in him he beheld his own essence, his wisdom, his power, his justice, and his person; and he was that excellent instrument designed from eternal ages to represent, as in a double mirror, not only the glories of God to himself, but also to all the world; and he glorified God by the instrument of obedience, in which God beheld his own dominion and the sanctity of his laws clearly represented; and he saw his justice glorified, when it was fully satisfied by the passion of his Son: and so he hath transmitted to us a great manner of the divine glorification, being become to

us the author and example of giving glory to God after the manner of men, that is, by well doing and patient suffering, by obeying his laws and submitting to his power, by imitating his holiness and confessing his goodness, by remaining innocent or becoming penitent; for this also is called in the text 'giving glory to the Lord our God.'

For he that hath dishonoured God by sins, that is, hath denied, by a moral instrument of duty and subordination, to confess the glories of his power, and the goodness of his laws, and hath dishonoured and despised his mercy, which God intended as an instrument of our piety, hath no better way to glorify God than by returning to his duty, to advance the honour of the divine attributes, in which he is pleased to communicate himself, and to have intercourse with man. He that repents, confesses his own error, and the righteousness of God's laws; and by judging himself confesses that he deserves punishment; and therefore, that God is righteous if he punishes him; and, by returning, confesses God to be the fountain of felicity, and the foundation of true, solid, and permanent joys, saying in the sense and passion of the disciples, 'Whither shall we go? for thou hast the words of eternal life:' and, by humbling himself, exalts God, by making the proportions of distance more immense and vast. And as repentance does contain in it all the parts of holy life, which can be performed by a returning sinner; (all the acts and habits of virtue being but parts, or instances, or effects of repentance;) so all the actions of a holy life do constitute the mass and body of all those instruments, whereby God is pleased to glorify himself. For if God is glorified in the sun and moon, in the rare

fabric of the honeycombs, in the discipline of bees, in the economy of ants, in the little houses of birds, in the curiosity of an eye, God being pleased to delight in those little images and reflexes of himself from those pretty mirrors, which, like a crevice in the wall, through a narrow perspective, transmit the species of a vast excellency; much rather shall God be pleased to behold himself in the glasses of our obedience, in the emissions of our will and understanding; these being rational and apt instruments to express him, far better than the natural, as being nearer communications of himself.

But I shall no longer discourse of the philosophy of this expression: certain it is, that in the style of Scripture, repentance is the great 'glorification of God;' and the prophet, by calling the people to 'give God glory,' calls on them 'to repent,' and so expresses both the duty and the event of it; the event being 'glory to God on high, peace on earth, and good-will towards men' by the sole instrument of repentance. And this was it which Joshua said to Achan, 'Give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him:'¹ that one act of repentance is one act of glorifying God. And this David acknowledged; 'Against thee only have I sinned that thou mightest be justified or cleared:'² that is, that God may have the honour of being righteous, and we the shame of receding from so excellent a perfection; or, as St. Paul quotes and explicates the place, 'Let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written, that thou mightest

¹ Joshua, vii. 19.

² Psalm li. 4.

be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.'¹ But to clear the sense of this expression of the prophet, observe the words of St. John: 'And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over those plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.'²

So that having strength and reason from these so many authorities, I may be free to read the words of my text thus: 'Repent of all your sins, before God cause darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains.' And then we have here the duty of repentance, and the time of its performance. It must be *μετάνοια εὐκαιρος*, "a seasonable and timely repentance," a repentance which must begin before our darkness begin, a repentance in the day-time; "that ye may work while it is to-day;" lest, if we 'stumble on the dark mountains,' that is, fall into the ruins of old age, which makes a broad way narrow, and a plain way to be a craggy mountain; or if we stumble and fall into our last sickness; instead of health God send us to our grave; and, instead of light and salvation, which we then confidently look for, he make our state to be outer darkness, that is, misery irremediable, misery eternal.

This exhortation of the prophet was always full of caution and prudence, but now it is highly necessary; since men, who are so clamorously called to repentance, that they cannot avoid the necessity of it; yet, that they may reconcile an evil life with the hopes of heaven, have crowded this duty into so little room, that it is almost strangled and ex-

¹ Rom. iii. 4.

² Rev. xvi. 9.

tinct ; and they have lopped off so many members, that they have reduced the whole body of it to the dimensions of a little finger, sacrificing their childhood to vanity, their youth to lust and to intemperance, their manhood to ambition and rage, pride and revenge, secular desires and unholy actions ; and yet still further, giving their old age to covetousness and oppression, to the world and the devil : and, after all this, what remains for God and for religion ? Oh, for that they will do well enough : on their death-bed they will think a few godly thoughts, they will send for a priest to minister comfort to them, they will pray and ask God forgiveness, and receive the holy sacrament, and leave their goods behind them, disposing them to their friends and relatives, and some dole and issues of the alms-basket to the poor ; and if after all this they die quietly, and like a lamb, and be canonised by a bribed flatterer in a funeral sermon, they make no doubt but they are children of the kingdom, and perceive not their folly, till, without hope of remedy, they roar in their expectations of a certain, but a horrid eternity of pains. Certainly nothing hath made more ample harvests for the devil, than the deferring of repentance on vain confidences, and lessening it in the extension of parts as well as intention of degrees, while we imagine that a few tears and scatterings of devotion are enough to expiate the baseness of a fifty or a three-score years' impiety. This I shall endeavour to cure, by showing what it is to repent, and that repentance implies in it the duty of a life, or of many and great, of long and lasting parts of it ; and then, by direct arguments, showing that repentance put off to our death-bed, is invalid and

ineffectual, sick, languid, and impotent, like our bodies and disabled faculties.

1. First, therefore, repentance implies a deep sorrow, as the beginning and introduction of this duty: not a superficial sigh or tear, not a calling ourselves sinners and miserable persons: this is far from that 'godly sorrow that worketh repentance:' and yet I wish there were none in the world, or none amongst us, who cannot remember that ever they have done this little towards the abolition of their multitudes of sins: but yet, if it were not a hearty, pungent sorrow, a sorrow that shall break the heart in pieces, a sorrow that shall so irreconcile us to sin, as to make us rather choose to die than to sin, it is not so much as the beginning of repentance. But in Holy Scripture, when the people are called to repentance, and sorrow (which is ever the prologue to it) marches sadly, and first opens the scene, it is ever expressed to be great, clamorous, and sad: it is called 'a weeping sorely' in the next verse after my text; 'a weeping with the bitterness of heart;' 'a turning to the Lord with weeping, fasting, and mourning;' 'a weeping day and night;' the 'sorrow of heart;' the 'breaking of the spirit;' the 'mourning like a dove,' and 'chattering like a swallow.'² And if we observe the threnes³ and sad accents of the prophet Jeremy, when he wept for the sins of his nation; the heart-breakings of David, when he mourned for his adultery and murder; and the bitter tears of St. Peter, when he washed off the guilt and baseness of his fall, and the denying his Master; we shall be sufficiently instructed in this

¹ Ezek. xxvii. 31.

² Joel, ii. 13.

³ Θρήνος, wailing, lamentation.

prælude or “introduction” to repentance; and that it is not every breath of a sigh, or moisture of a tender eye; not every crying “Lord have mercy on me,” that is such a sorrow, as begins our restitution to the state of grace and divine favour; but such a sorrow, that really condemns ourselves, and by an active, effectual sentence, declares us worthy of stripes and death, of sorrow and eternal pains, and willingly endures the first to prevent the second; and weeps, and mourns, and fasts, to obtain of God but to admit us to a possibility of restitution. And, although all sorrow for sins hath not the same expression, nor the same degree of pungency and sensitive trouble, which differ according to the temper of the body, custom, the sex, and accidental tenderness;¹ yet it is not a godly sorrow, unless it really produce those effects: that is, first, that it makes us really to hate, and, secondly, actually to decline sin; and, thirdly, produce in us a fear of God’s anger, a sense of the guilt of his displeasure; and, fourthly, then such consequent trouble as can consist with such apprehension of the divine displeasure: which if it express not in tears and hearty complaints, must be expressed in watchings and strivings against sin; in confessing the goodness and justice of God threatening or punishing us; in patiently bearing the rod of God; in confession of our sins; in accusation of ourselves; in perpetual begging of pardon, and mean and base opinions of ourselves; and in all the natural productions from these, according to our temper and constitution;—it must be a sorrow of the reasonable faculty, the

¹ See Rule of Holy Living, art. Repentance.

greatest in its kind : and if it be less in kind, or not productive of these effects, it is not a godly sorrow, not the beginning of repentance.

But I desire that it be observed, that sorrow for sins is not repentance ; not that duty which gives glory to God, so as to obtain of him that he will glorify us. Repentance is a great volume of duty ; and godly sorrow is but the frontispiece or title-page ; it is the harbinger or first introduction to it : or, if you will consider it in the words of St. Paul, ‘ Godly sorrow worketh repentance : ’¹—sorrow is the parent, and repentance is the product. And, therefore, it is a high piece of ignorance to suppose, that a crying out and roaring for our sins on our death-bed can reconcile us to God : our crying to God must be so early and so lasting, as to be able to teem and produce such a daughter, which must live long, and grow from an embryo to an infant, from infancy to childhood, from thence to the fullness of the stature of Christ ; and then it is a holy and a happy sorrow. But if it be a sorrow only of a death-bed, it is a fruitless shower ; or, like the rain of Sodom, not the beginning of repentance, but the kindling of a flame, the commencement of an eternal sorrow. For Ahab had a great sorrow, but it wrought nothing on his spirit ; it did not reconcile his affections to his duty, and his duty to God. Judas had so great a sorrow for betraying the innocent blood of his Lord, that it was intolerable to his spirit. And if mere sorrow be repentance, then hell is full of penitents ; for ‘ there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, for evermore.’

Let us, therefore, beg of God, as Caleb’s daughter

¹ 2 Cor. vii. 10.

did of her father : 'Thou hast given me a dry land, give me also a land of waters,' a dwelling-place in tears, rivers of tears ; "that," as St. Austin's expression is, "because we are not worthy to lift up our eyes to heaven in prayer, yet we may be worthy to weep ourselves blind for sin."¹ The meaning is, that we beg sorrow of God, such a sorrow as may be sufficient to quench the flames of lust, and surmount the hills of our pride, and may extinguish our thirst of covetousness ; that is, a sorrow that shall be an effective principle of arming all our faculties against sin, and heartily setting on the work of grace, and the persevering labours of a holy life. I shall only add one word to this: that our sorrow for sin is not to be estimated by our tears and our sensible expressions, but by our active hatred and dereliction of sin ; and is many times unperceived in outward demonstration. We can only be sure that our sorrow is a godly sorrow, when it worketh repentance ; that is, when it makes us hate and leave all our sin, and take up the cross of patience or penance ; that is, confess our sin, accuse ourselves, condemn the action by hearty sentence : and then, if it hath no other emanation but fasting and prayer for its pardon, and hearty industry towards its abolition, our sorrow is not reprobable.

2. For sorrow alone will not do it ; there must follow a total dereliction of our sin ; and this is the first part of repentance. Concerning which I consider, that it is a sad mistake amongst many that do some things towards repentance, that they mistake the first addresses and instruments of this part of repentance for the whole duty itself. Confes-

¹ Ut, quoniam non sumus digni oculus orando ad cælum levare, at simus digni oculos plorando cæcare.

sion of sins is in order to the dereliction of them : but then confession must not be like the unlading of a ship to take in new stowage ; or the vomits of intemperance, which ease the stomach that they may continue the merry meeting. But such a confession is too frequent, in which men either comply with custom, or seek to ease a present load or gripe of conscience, or are willing to dress up their souls against a festival, or hope for pardon on so easy terms : these are but retirings back to leap the further into mischief ; or but approaches to God with the lips. No confession can be of any use, but as it is an instrument of shame to the person, of humiliation to the man, and dereliction of the sin ; and receives its recompense but as it adds to these purposes : all other is like ‘ the bleating of the calves and the lowing of the oxen,’ which Saul reserved after the spoil of Agag ; they proclaim the sin, but do nothing towards its cure ; they serve God’s end to make us justly to be condemned out of our own mouths, but nothing at all towards our absolution. Nay, if we proceed further to the greatest expressions of humiliation, (parts of which I reckon fasting, praying for pardon, judging and condemning of ourselves by instances of a present indignation against a crime,) yet, unless this proceed so far as to a total deletion of the sin, to the extirpation of every vicious habit, God is not glorified by our repentance, nor we secured in our eternal interest. Our sin must be brought to judgment, and, like Antinous in Homer, laid in the midst, as the sacrifice and the cause of all the mischief.¹ This is

¹ ‘ Ἀλλ’ ὁ μὲν ἤδη κείται, δὲ αἷτιος ἔπλετο πάντων. *Od.* x. 48.

the murderer, this is the 'Achan,' this is 'he that troubles Israel:' let the sin be confessed and carried with the pomps and solemnities of sorrow to its funeral, and so let the murderer be slain. But if, after all the forms of confession and sorrow, fasting, and humiliation, and pretence of doing the will of God, we 'spare Agag and the fattest of the cattle'—our delicioussins—and still leave an unlawful king, and a tyrant sin to reign in our mortal bodies; we may pretend what we will towards repentance, but we are no better penitents than Ahab; no nearer to the obtaining of our hopes than Esau was to his birthright, 'for whose repentance there was no place left, though he sought it carefully with tears.'

3. Well, let us suppose our penitent advanced thus far, as that he decrees against all sin, and in his hearty purposes resolves to decline it, as in a severe sentence he hath condemned it as his betrayer and his murderer; yet we must be curious (for now only the repentance properly begins) that it be not only like the springings of the thorny or the high-way ground, soon up and soon down: for some men, when a sadness or an unhandsome accident surprises them, then they resolve against their sin; but as soon as the thorns are removed, return to their first hardness, and resolve then to act their first temptation. Others there are who never resolve against a sin, but either when they have no temptation to it, or when their appetites are newly satisfied with it; like those who immediately after a full dinner resolve to fast at supper, and they keep it till their appetite returns, and then their resolution unties like the cords of vanity, or the gossamer against the violence of the northern wind.

Thus a lustful person fills all the capacity of his lust; and when he is wearied, and the sin goes off with unquietness and regret, and the appetite falls down like a horse-leech, when it is ready to burst with putrefaction and an unwholesome plethory, then he resolves to be a good man, and could almost vow to be a hermit: but, the next spring-tide that comes, every wave of the temptation makes an inroad on the resolution, and gets ground, and prevails against it, more than his resolution prevailed against his sin. How many drunken persons, how many swearers, resolve daily and hourly against their sins, and yet act them not once the less for all their infinite heap of shamefully-retreating purposes! That resolution that begins on just grounds of sorrow and severe judgment, on fear and love, that is made in the midst of a temptation, that is inquisitive into all the means and instruments of the cure, that prays perpetually against a sin, that watches continually against a surprise, and never sinks into it by deliberation; that fights earnestly, and carries on the war prudently, and prevails by a never-ceasing diligence against the temptation; that only is a pious and well-begun repentance. They that have their fits of a quartan, well and ill for ever, and think themselves in perfect health when the ague is retired, till its period returns, are dangerously mistaken. Those intervals of imperfect and fallacious resolution are nothing but states of death: and if a man should depart this world in one of those godly fits, as he thinks them, he is no nearer to obtain his blessed hope, than a man in the stone-colic is to health, when his pain is eased for the present, his disease still remaining, and threatening an unwelcome return. That reso-

lution only is the beginning of a holy repentance, which goes forth into act, and whose acts enlarge into habits, and whose habits are productive of the fruits of a holy life.

From hence we are to take our estimate, whence our resolutions of piety must commence. He that resolves not to live well, till the time comes that he must die, is ridiculous in his great design, as he is impertinent in his intermedial purposes, and vain in his hope. Can a dying man to any real effect resolve to be chaste? For virtue must be an act of election, and chastity is the contesting against a proud and an imperious lust, active flesh, and insinuating temptation. And what doth he resolve against, who can no more be tempted to the sin of unchastity, than he can return back again to his youth and vigour? And it is considerable, that since all the purposes of a holy life which a dying man can make, cannot be reduced to act; by what law, or reason, or covenant, or revelation, are we taught to distinguish the resolution of a dying man from the purposes of a living and vigorous person? Suppose a man in his youth and health, moved by consideration of the irregularity and deformity of sin, the danger of its productions, the wrath and displeasure of Almighty God, should resolve to leave the puddles of impurity, and walk in the paths of righteousness; can this resolution alone put him into the state of grace? Is he admitted to pardon and the favour of God, because he hath in some measure performed actually what he so reasonably hath resolved? by no means. For resolution and purpose is, in its own nature and constitution, an imperfect act, and therefore can signify nothing without its performance and consumma-

tion. It is as a faculty is to the act, as spring is to the harvest, as seed-time is to the autumn, as eggs are to birds, or as a relative to its correspondent; nothing without it. And can it be imagined that a resolution in our health and life shall be effectual without performance? And shall a resolution, barely such, do any good on our death-bed? Can such purposes prevail against a long impiety, rather than against a young and a newly-begun state of sin? Will God at an easier rate pardon the sins of fifty or sixty years, than the sins of our youth only, or the iniquity of five years, or ten? If a holy life be not necessary to be lived, why shall it be necessary to resolve to live in it? But if a holy life be necessary, then it cannot be sufficient merely to resolve it, unless this resolution go forth in an actual and real service. Vain therefore is the hope of those persons, who either go on in their sins before their last sickness, never thinking to return into the ways of God, from whence they have wandered all their life, never renewing their resolutions and vows of holy living; or if they have, yet their purposes are for ever blasted with the next violent temptation. More prudent was the prayer of David: 'Oh spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence and be no more seen.' And something like it was the saying of the emperor Charles the Fifth; "There ought to be a period of reflection, between the active business of life, and the day of our death." Whenever our holy purposes are renewed, unless God give us time to act them, to mortify and subdue our lusts, to conquer and subdue the whole

¹ *Inter vitæ negotia et mortis diem oportet spatium intercedere.*

kingdom of sin, to rise from our grave, and be clothed with nerves and flesh and a new skin, to overcome our deadly sicknesses, and by little and little to return to health and strength; unless we have grace and time to do all this, our sins will lie down with us in our graves. For when a man hath contracted a long habit of sin, and it hath been growing on him ten or twenty, forty or fifty years, whose acts he hath daily or hourly repeated, and they are grown to a second nature to him,—and have so prevailed on the ruins of his spirit, that the man is taken captive by the devil at his will, he is fast bound, as a slave tugging at the oar; that he is grown in love with his fetters, and longs to be doing the work of sin;—is it likely, that after all this progress and growth in sin, in the ways of which he runs fast without any impediment;—is it, I say, likely, that a few days or weeks of sickness can recover him? Can a man be supposed so prompt to piety and holy living—a man, I mean, that hath lived wickedly a long time together—can he be of so ready and active a virtue on the sudden, as to recover, in a month or a week, what he hath been undoing in twenty or thirty years? Is it so easy to build, that a weak and infirm person, bound hand and foot, shall be able to build more in three days than was a-building above forty years? Christ did it in a figurative sense: but in this, it is not in the power of any man so suddenly to be recovered from so long a sickness. Necessary therefore it is that all these instruments of our conversion,—confession of sins, praying for their pardon, and resolution to lead a new life,—should begin, ‘before our feet stumble on the dark mountains;’ lest we

leave the work only resolved on to be begun, which it is necessary we should in many degrees finish, if ever we mean to escape the eternal darkness. For that we should actually abolish the whole body of sin and death,—that we should crucify the old man with his lusts,—that we should lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us,—that we should cast away the works of darkness,—that we should awake from sleep, and arise from death,—that we should redeem the time,—that we should cleanse our hands and purify our hearts,—that we should have escaped the corruption (all the corruption) that is in the whole world through lust,—that nothing of the old leaven should remain in us,—but that we be wholly a new lump, thoroughly transformed and changed in the image of our mind;—these are the perpetual precepts of the Spirit, and the certain duty of man; and that to have all these in purpose only, is merely to no purpose, without the actual eradication of every vicious habit, and the certain abolition of every criminal adherence,—is clearly and dogmatically decreed every where in the Scripture. ‘For, (they are the words of St. Paul) ‘they that are Christ’s, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts;’¹ the work is actually done, and sin is dead or wounded mortally, before they can in any sense belong to Christ, to be a portion of his inheritance: and ‘He that is in Christ, is a new creature.’² For ‘in Christ Jesus nothing can avail but a new creature;’³ nothing but a ‘keeping the commandments of God.’⁴ Not all tears, though we should weep like David and his men at Ziklag,

¹ Gal. v. 24.² Ib. vi. 15.
1 Cor. vii. 19.³ Ib. v. 6.

‘till they could weep no more,’ or the women of Ramah, or like ‘the weeping in the valley of Hinnom,’ could suffice, if we retain the affection to any one sin, or have any unrepented of or unmortified. It is true that ‘a contrite and a broken heart God will not despise:’ no, he will not. For if it be a hearty and permanent sorrow, it is an excellent beginning of repentance; and God will to a timely sorrow give the grace of repentance: he will not give pardon to sorrow alone; but that which ought to be the proper effect of sorrow, that God shall give. He shall then open the gates of mercy, and admit you to a possibility of restitution: so that you may be within the covenant of repentance, which if you actually perform, you may expect God’s promise. And in this sense confession will obtain our pardon, and humiliation will be accepted, and our holy purposes and pious resolutions shall be accounted for; that is, these being the first steps and addresses to that part of repentance which consists in the abolition of sins, shall be accepted so far as to procure so much of the pardon, to do so much of the work of restitution, that God will admit the returning man to a further degree of emendation, to a nearer possibility of working out his salvation. But then, if this sorrow and confession, and these strong purposes, begin then when our life is declined towards the west, and is now ready to set in darkness and a dismal night; because of themselves they could but procure an admission to repentance, not at all to pardon and plenary absolution, by showing that on our death-bed these are too late and ineffectual, they call on us to begin betimes, when these imperfect acts may be con-

summate and perfect in the actual performing those parts of holy life, to which they were ordained in the nature of the thing, and the purposes of God.

4. Lastly, suppose all this be done, and that by a long course of strictness and severity, mortification and circumspection, we have overcome all our vicious and baser habits; suppose that he hath wept and fasted, prayed and vowed to excellent purposes; yet all this is but the one half of repentance, so infinitely mistaken is the world, to think any thing to be enough to make up repentance. But to renew us, and restore us to the favour of God, there is required far more than what hath been yet accounted for. See it in 2 Pet. i. 4, 5. 'Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust: and besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience,' and so on, 'to godliness, to brotherly kindness, and to charity: these things must be in you and abound. This is the sum total of repentance: we must not only have overcome sin, but we must, after great diligence, have acquired the habits of all those Christian graces, which are necessary in the transaction of our affairs, in all relations to God and our neighbour, and our own persons. It is not enough to say, 'Lord, I thank thee, I am no extortioner, no adulterer, not as this publican:' all the reward of such a penitent is, that when he hath escaped the corruption of the world, he hath also escaped those heavy judgments which threatened his ruin. It may be, we have escaped the rod of the exterminating angel, when our sins are crucified: but we shall never 'enter into the joy of the Lord,' unless, after we have 'put

off the old man with his affections and lusts,' we also 'put on the new man in righteousness and holiness of life.'¹ And this we are taught in most plain doctrine by St. Paul: 'Let us lay aside the weight that doth so easily beset us;' that is the one half: and then it follows, 'Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' These are the 'fruits meet for repentance,' spoken of by St. John Baptist; that is, when we renew our first undertaking in baptism, and return to our course of innocence.

*"Parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens,
Insanientis dum sapientiæ
Consultus erro, nunc retrorsum
Vela dare, atque iterare cursus
Cogor relictos."*²

The sense of which words is well given us by St. John: 'Remember whence thou art fallen; repent, and do thy first works.'³ For all our hopes of heaven rely on that covenant which God made with us in baptism; which is, 'that being redeemed from our vain conversation, we should serve him in holiness and righteousness all our days.' Now when any of us hath prevaricated our part of the covenant, we must return to that state, and redeem the intermedial time spent in sin, by our doubled industry in the ways of grace: we must be reduced to our first estate, and make some proportionable returns of duty for our sad omissions, and great violations of our baptismal vow. For God having made no covenant with us but that which is con-signed in baptism; in the same proportion in which we retain or return to that, in the same we are to

¹ Heb. xii. 1.² Hor. Od. i. 34. 1.

Revel. ii.

expect the pardon of our sins, and all the other promises evangelical ; but no otherwise, unless we can show a new gospel, or be baptized again by God's appointment. He, therefore, that by a long habit, by a state and continued course of sin, hath gone so far from his baptismal purity, as that he hath nothing of the Christian left on him but his name ; that man hath much to do to make his garments clean, to purify his soul, to take off all the stains of sin, that his spirit may be presented pure to the eyes of God, who beholds no impurity. It is not an easy thing to cure a long-contracted habit of sin. Let any intemperate person but try in his own instance of drunkenness ; or the swearer, in the sweetening his unwholesome language : but then so to command his tongue that he never swear, but that his speech be prudent, pious, and apt to edify the hearer, or in some sense to glorify God ; or to become temperate, to have got a habit of sobriety, or chastity, or humility, is the work of a life. And if we do but consider, that he that lives well from his younger years, or takes up at the end of his youthful heats, and enters into the courses of a sober life early, diligently, and vigorously, shall find himself, after the studies and labours of twenty or thirty years' piety, but a very imperfect person, many degrees of pride left unrooted up, many inroads of intemperance or beginnings of excess, much indevotion and backwardness in religion, many temptations to contest against, and some infirmities which he shall never say he hath mastered ; we shall find the work of a holy life is not to be deferred till our days are almost done, till our strengths are decayed, our spirits are weak, and our lust strong, our habits confirmed, and our long-

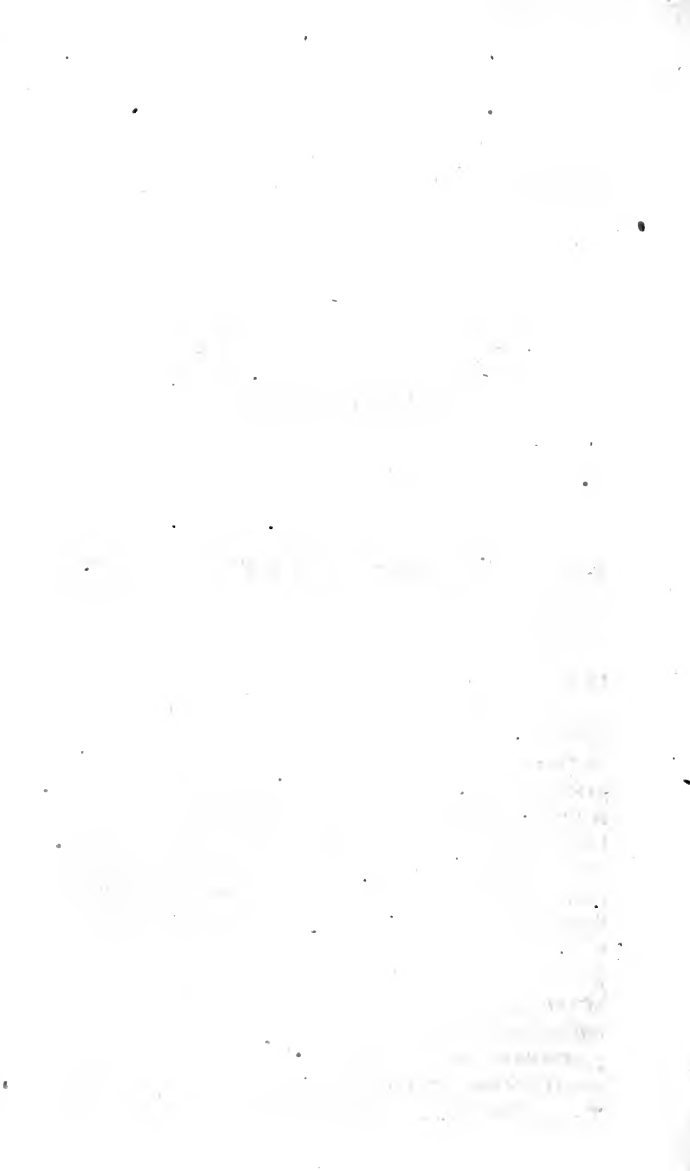
ings after sin many and impotent: for what is very hard to be done, and is always done imperfectly, when there is length of time, and a less work to do, and more abilities to do it withal; when the time is short, and almost expired, and the work made difficult and vast, and the strengths weaker, and the faculties are disabled, will seem little less than absolutely impossible. I shall end this general consideration with the question of the apostle: 'If the righteous scarcely be saved,' if it be so difficult to overcome our sins, and obtain virtuous habits; difficult, I say, to a righteous, a sober, and well-living person; 'where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' what shall become of him, who, by his evil life, hath not only removed himself from the affections, but even from the possibilities of virtue? He that hath lived in sin, will die in sorrow.

SERMON VII.
ON SELF-DENIAL.

BY THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

[JOHN WESLEY, born 1703, died 1791.]



S E R M O N VII.

LUKE, ix. 23.

And he said unto them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

IT has been frequently imagined, that the direction here given related chiefly, if not wholly, to the apostles ; at least to the Christians of the first ages, or those in a state of persecution. But this is a grievous mistake : for, although our blessed Lord is here directing his discourse more immediately to his apostles, and those other disciples who attended him in the days of his flesh ; yet in them he speaks to us, and to all mankind, without any exception or limitation. The very reason of the thing puts it beyond dispute, that the duty which is here enjoined is not peculiar to them, or to the Christians of the early ages. It no more regards any particular order of men, or particular time, than any particular country. No : it is of the most universal nature, respecting all times and all persons. Yea, and all things : not meats and drinks only, and

things pertaining to the senses. The meaning is, if any man, of whatever rank, station, circumstances, in any nation, in any age of the world, will effectually come after me, let him deny himself in all things; 'let him take up his cross,' of whatever kind, yea, and that 'daily, and follow me.'

The 'denying ourselves,' and the 'taking up our cross,' in the full extent of the expression, is not a thing of small concern: it is not expedient only, as are some of the circumstantialia of religion; but it is absolutely, indispensably necessary, either to our becoming, or continuing his disciples. It is absolutely necessary, in the very nature of the thing, to our 'coming after him,' and 'following him.' Inasmuch that, as far as we do not practise it, we are not his disciples. If we do not continually deny ourselves, we do not learn of him, but of other masters. If we do not take up our cross daily, we do not come after him, but after the world, or the prince of the world, or our own fleshly mind. If we are not walking in the way of the cross, we are not following him, we are not treading in his steps, but going back from, or at least wide of him.

It is for this reason that so many ministers of Christ, in almost every age and nation, particularly since the reformation of the church from the innovations and corruptions which had gradually crept into it, have wrote and spoke so largely on this important duty, both in their public discourses and private exhortations. This induced them to disperse abroad many tracts upon the subject; and some in our nation. They knew both from the oracles of God, and from the testimony of their own experience, how impossible it is not to deny our Master, unless we will deny ourselves; and

how vainly we attempt to follow him that was crucified, unless we take up our own cross daily.

But may not this very consideration make it reasonable to inquire, if so much has been said and wrote on the subject already, what need is there to say or write any more? I answer: There are considerable numbers, even of people fearing God, who have not had the opportunity either of hearing what has been spoken, or reading what has been written upon it. And perhaps if they had read much of what has been written, they would not have been much profited. Many who have wrote, (some of them large volumes,) do by no means appear to have understood the subject. Either they had imperfect views of the very nature of it, (and then they could never explain it to others,) or they were unacquainted with the due extent of it; they did not see how exceeding broad this command is: or they were not sensible of the absolute, the indispensable necessity of it. Others speak of it in so dark, so perplexed, so intricate, so mystical a manner, as if they deigned rather to conceal it from the vulgar, than to explain it to common readers. Others speak admirably well, with great clearness and strength, on the necessity of self-denial; but then they deal in generals only, without coming to particular instances, and so are of little use to the bulk of mankind, to men of ordinary capacity and education. And if some of them do descend to particulars, it is to those particulars only which do not affect the generality of men; since they seldom, if ever, occur in common life: such as the enduring imprisonment, or tortures; the giving up, in a literal sense, their houses or lands, their husbands or wives, children, or

life itself : to none of which we are called, nor are likely to be, unless God should permit times of public persecution to return. In the meantime, I know of no writer in the English tongue, who has described the nature of self-denial in plain and intelligible terms, such as lie level with common understandings, and applied it to those little particulars which daily occur in common life. A discourse of this kind is wanted still ; and it is wanted the more, because in every stage of the spiritual life, although there is a variety of particular hinderances of our attaining grace, or growing therein, yet are they all resolvable into these general ones :—either we do not deny ourselves, or we do not take up our cross.

In order to supply this defect in some degree, I shall endeavour to show, first, What it is for a man to deny himself, and what to take up his cross : and, secondly, That if a man be not fully Christ's disciple, it is always owing to the want of this.

I. I shall, first, endeavour to show what it is for a man to deny himself, and take up his cross daily. This is a point, which is of all others most necessary to be considered, and thoroughly understood, even on this account, that it is of all others most opposed by numerous and powerful enemies. All our nature must certainly rise up against this, even in its own defence : the world, consequently, the men who take nature, not grace, for their guide, abhor the very sound of it. And the great enemy of our souls, well knowing its importance, cannot but move every stone against it. But this is not all : even those, who have in some measure shaken off the yoke of the devil, who have experienced

a real work of grace in their hearts, yet are no friends to this grand doctrine of Christianity, though it is so peculiarly insisted on by their Master. Some of them are as deeply and totally ignorant concerning it, as if there were not one word about it in the Bible. Others are further off still, having unawares imbibed strong prejudices against it. These they have received partly from outside Christians; men of a fair speech and behaviour, who want nothing of godliness but the power, nothing of religion but the spirit; and partly from those who did once, if they do not now, "taste of the powers of the world to come." But, are there any of these who do not both practise self-denial themselves, and recommend it to others? You are little acquainted with mankind, if you doubt of this. There are whole bodies of men, who only do not declare war against it. To go no further than our own neighbourhood, I might point out more than one body of Christians, professing to enjoy a peculiar light of faith, few of whom even profess to practise it all; few of whom either recommend it themselves, or are pleased with them that do. Rather, do they not continually represent it in the most odious colours, as if it were seeking "salvation by works," or "seeking to establish our own righteousness." Therefore, you are in constant danger of being wheedled, hectored, or ridiculed out of this important gospel-doctrine, either by false teachers, or false brethren, (more or less beguiled from the simplicity of the gospel,) if you are not deeply grounded therein. Let fervent prayer then go before, accompany, and follow what you are now about to read that it may be written

in your heart by the finger of God, so as never to be erased.

But what is self-denial? Wherein are we to deny ourselves? And whence does the necessity of this arise? I answer—the will of God is the supreme, unalterable rule for every intelligent creature; equally binding every angel in heaven, and every man upon earth. Nor can it be otherwise; this is the natural, necessary result of the relation between creatures and their Creator. But if the will of God be our one rule of action in every thing, great and small, it follows by undeniable consequence, that we are not to do our own will in any thing. Here, therefore, we see at once the nature, with the ground and reason of self-denial. We see the nature of self-denial: it is the denying or refusing to follow our own will, from a conviction that the will of God is the only rule of action to us. And we see the reason thereof, because we are creatures; ‘because it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves.’

This reason for self-denial, must hold even with regard to the angels of God in heaven; and with regard to man, innocent and holy as he came out of the hands of his Creator. But a further reason for it arises from the condition wherein all men are since the fall. We are all now “shapen in wickedness, and in sin did our mother conceive us.” Our nature is altogether corrupt, in every power and faculty. And our will, depraved equally with the rest, is wholly bent to indulge our natural corruption. On the other hand, it is the will of God that we resist and counteract that corruption, not at some times, or in some things only, but at all

times, and in all things. Here, therefore, is a further ground for constant and universal self-denial.

To illustrate this a little further. The will of God is a path leading straight to God. The will of man, which once ran parallel with it, is now another path, not only different from it, but, in our present state, directly contrary to it: it leads from God. If, therefore, we walk in the one, we must necessarily quit the other. We cannot walk in both. Indeed, a man of faint heart and feeble hands may go in two ways, one after the other. But he cannot walk in two ways at the same time; he cannot, at one and the same time, follow his own will, and follow the will of God: he must choose the one or the other; denying God's will, to follow his own; or denying himself, to follow the will of God.

Now, it is undoubtedly pleasing, for the time, to follow our own will, by indulging, in any instance that offers, the corruption of our nature. But by following it in any thing, we so far strengthen the perverseness of our will; and by indulging it, we continually increase the corruption of our nature. So by the food, which is agreeable to the palate, we often increase a bodily disease. It gratifies the taste, but it inflames the disorder. It brings pleasure, but it also brings death.

On the whole, then, to deny ourselves, is, to deny our own will, where it does not fall in with the will of God, and that however pleasing it may be. It is to deny ourselves any pleasure which does not spring from, and lead to God: that is, in effect, to refuse going out of our way, though into a pleasant, flowery path; to refuse what we know to be deadly noison, though agreeable to the taste.

And every one that would follow Christ, that would be his real disciple, must not only 'deny himself,' but 'take up his cross' also. A cross is any thing contrary to our will, any thing displeasing to our nature. So that taking up our cross goes a little further than denying ourselves; it rises a little higher, and is a more difficult task to flesh and blood; it being more easy to forego pleasure than to endure pain.

Now, in running the race which is set before us, according to the will of God, there is often a cross lying in the way; that is, something which is not only not joyous, but grievous; something which is contrary to our will, which is displeasing to our nature. What then is to be done? The choice is plain: either we must take up our cross, or we must turn aside from the way of God—from the holy commandment delivered to us; if we do not stop altogether, or turn back to everlasting perdition.

In order to the healing of that corruption, that evil disease, which every man brings with him into the world, it is often needful to pluck out, as it were, a right eye, to cut off a right hand; so painful is either the thing itself which must be done, or the only means of doing it: the parting, suppose, with a foolish desire, with an inordinate affection; or a separation from the object of it, without which it can never be extinguished. In the former kind, the tearing away such a desire or affection, when it is deeply rooted in the soul, is often like the piercing of a sword, yea, like 'the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow.'¹ The Lord then 'sits' upon the soul

¹ Heb. iv. 12.

‘as a refiner’s fire,’ to burn up all the dross thereof. And this is a cross indeed; it is essentially painful; it must be so in the very nature of the thing. The soul cannot be thus torn asunder, it cannot pass through the fire, without pain.

In the latter kind, the means to heal a sin-sick soul, to cure a foolish desire, an inordinate affection, are often painful, not in the nature of the thing, but from the nature of the disease. So when our Lord said to the rich young man, ‘Go, sell that thou hast, and give it to the poor,’ (as well knowing this was the only means of healing his covetousness,) the very thought of it gave him so much pain, that ‘he went away sorrowful;’ choosing rather to part with his hope of heaven, than his possessions on earth. This was a burden he could not consent to lift, a cross he would not take up. And in the one kind, or the other, every follower of Christ will surely have need to ‘take up his cross daily.’

The taking up differs a little from bearing his cross. We are then properly said to bear our cross, when we endure what is laid upon us without our choice, with meekness and resignation. Whereas we do not properly take up our cross but when we voluntarily suffer what is in our power to avoid; when we willingly embrace the will of God, though contrary to our own; when we choose what is painful, because it is the will of our wise and gracious Creator.

And thus it behoves every disciple of Christ to ‘take up,’ as well as to bear his cross. Indeed, in one sense, it is not his alone: it is common to him and many others; seeing ‘there is no temptation befalls any man, *ἐν μὴ ἀνθρώπινος*, but such as is common to

men; such as is incident and adapted to their common nature and situation in the present world. But in another sense, as it is considered with all its circumstances, it is his; peculiar to himself: it is prepared of God for him; it is given by God to him as a token of his love. And if he receives it as such, and, after using such means to remove the pressure as Christian wisdom directs, lies as clay in the potter's hand; it is disposed and ordered by God for his good, both with regard to the quality of it, and in respect to its quantity and degree, its duration, and every other circumstance.

In all this we may easily conceive our blessed Lord to act as the physician of our souls, not merely 'for his own pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.'¹ If in searching our wounds, he puts us to pain, it is only in order to heal them. He cuts away what is putrefied or unsound, in order to preserve the sound part. And if we freely choose the loss of a limb, rather than that the whole body should perish, how much more should we choose, figuratively, to cut off a right hand, rather than that the whole soul should be cast into hell?

We see plainly, then, both the nature and ground of 'taking up our cross.' It does not imply the 'disciplining ourselves,' (as some speak,) the literally tearing our own flesh; the wearing hair-cloth, or iron girdles, or any thing else that would impair our bodily health; (although we know not what allowance God may make for those who act thus through involuntary ignorance;) but the embracing the will of God, though contrary to our

¹ Heb. xii. 10.

own; the choosing wholesome, though bitter medicines; the freely accepting temporary pain, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, when it is either essentially or accidentally necessary to eternal pleasure.

II. I am, secondly, to show, that it is always owing to the want either of self-denial, or taking up his cross, that any man does not thoroughly follow him, is not fully a disciple of Christ.

It is true, this may be partly owing, in some cases, to the want of the means of grace; of hearing the true word of God spoken with power; of the sacraments, or of Christian fellowship. But where none of these is wanting, the great hinderance of our receiving, or growing in, the grace of God, is always the want of denying ourselves, or taking up our cross.

A few instances will make this plain. A man hears the word, which is able to save his soul. He is well pleased with what he hears, acknowledges the truth, and is a little affected by it. Yet he remains 'dead in trespasses and sins,' senseless and unawakened. Why is this? Because he will not part with his bosom sin, though he knows it is an abomination to the Lord. He came to hear, full of lust and unholy desires; and he will not part with them. Therefore, no deep impression is made upon him; but his foolish heart is still hardened; that is, he is still senseless and unawakened, because he will not deny himself.

Suppose he begins to awake out of sleep, and his eyes are a little opened, why are they so quickly closed again? Why does he again sink into the deep sleep of death? Because he again yields to his bosom sin; he drinks again of the

pleasing poison ; therefore it is impossible that any lasting impression should be made upon his heart ; that is, he relapses into his fatal insensibility, because he will not deny himself.

But this is not the case with all. We have many instances of those who, when once awakened, sleep no more. The impressions, once received, do not wear away : they are not only deep, but lasting. And yet, many of these have not found what they seek : they mourn, and yet are not comforted. Now, why is this ? It is because they do not ‘bring forth fruits meet for repentance ;’¹ because they do not, according to the grace they have received, ‘cease from evil, and do good.’ They do not cease from the easily-besetting sin ; the sin of their constitution, of their education, or of their profession. Or they omit doing the good they may, and know they ought to do, because of some disagreeable circumstance attending it ; that is, they do not attain faith, because they will not ‘deny themselves, or take up their cross.’

But this man did receive ‘the heavenly gift ; he did ‘taste of the powers of the world to come.’² He saw ‘the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.’³ The ‘peace which passeth all understanding,’ did ‘rule his heart and mind ;’⁴ and the love of God was shed abroad therein by the Holy Ghost which was given unto him.⁵ Yet he is now weak as another man. He again relishes the things of earth, and has more taste for the things which are seen, than for those which are not seen. The eye of his understanding is closed again,

¹ Matt. iii. 8.

² 2 Cor. iv. 6.

³ Heb. vi. 4, 5.

⁴ Phil. iv. 7.

⁵ Rom. v. 5.

so that he cannot 'see him that is invisible.'¹ His love is waxed cold, and the peace of God no longer rules in his heart. And no marvel; for he has again given place to the devil, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God. He has turned again unto folly—to some pleasing sin; if not in outward act, yet in heart. He has given place to pride, or anger, or desire, to self-will, or stubbornness. Or he did not stir up the gift of God which was in him; he gave way to spiritual sloth, and would not be at the pains of 'praying always, and watching thereunto with all perseverance:'² that is, he made shipwreck of the faith, for want of self-denial and taking up his cross daily.

But perhaps he has not made shipwreck of the faith: he has still a measure of the Spirit of adoption, which continues to witness with his spirit that he is a child of God. However, he is not 'going on to perfection';³ he is not as one hungering and thirsting after righteousness, panting after the whole image and full enjoyment of God, as the hart after the water-brook:⁴ rather, he is weary and faint in his mind, and, as it were, hovering between life and death. And why is he thus, but because he hath forgotten the word of God?—'By works is faith made perfect?' He does not use all diligence in working the works of God. He does not 'continue instant in prayer,'⁵ private as well as public; in communicating, hearing, meditation, fasting, and religious conference. If he does not wholly neglect some of these means, at least he does not use them with all his might. Or he is

¹ Heb. xi. 27.² Eph. vi. 18.³ Heb. vi. 1.⁴ Psalm xlii. 1.⁵ Rom. xii. 12.

not zealous of works of charity, as well as works of piety. He is not merciful after his power, with the full ability which God giveth. He does not fervently serve the Lord, by doing good to men, in every kind, and in every degree he can, to their souls as their bodies. And why does he not continue in prayer? Because in times of dryness it is pain and grief unto him. He does not continue in hearing at all opportunities; because sleep is sweet, or it is cold, or dark, or rainy. But why does he not continue in works of mercy? Because he cannot feed the hungry, or clothe the naked, unless he retrench the expense of his own apparel, or use cheaper and less pleasing food. Beside which, the visiting the sick, or those that are in prison, is attended with many disagreeable circumstances. And so are most works of spiritual mercy; reproof in particular. He would reprove his neighbour; but sometimes shame, sometimes fear, comes between. For he may expose himself not only to ridicule, but to heavier inconvenience too. Upon these, and the like considerations, he omits one or more, if not all works of mercy and piety. Therefore, his faith is not made perfect, neither can he grow in grace; namely, because he will not 'deny himself, and take up his daily cross.'

It manifestly follows, that it is always owing to the want either of self-denial, or taking up his cross, that a man does not thoroughly follow his Lord, that he is not fully a disciple of Christ. It is owing to this, that he, who is dead in sin, does not awake, though the trumpet be blown; that he, who begins to awake out of sleep, yet has no deep or lasting conviction; that he, who is deeply and

lastingly convinced of sin, does not attain remission of sins; that some who have received this heavenly gift, retain it not, but make shipwreck of the faith; and that others, if they do not 'draw back to perdition,'¹ yet are 'weary and faint in their minds,'² and do not reach the 'mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'³

III. How easily may we learn from hence, that they 'knew neither the Scripture, nor the power of God,'⁴ who directly or indirectly in public or in private, oppose the doctrine of self-denial and the daily cross. How totally ignorant are these men of a hundred particular texts, as well as of the general tenor of the whole oracles of God! And how entirely unacquainted must they be with true, genuine, Christian experience—of the manner wherein the Holy Spirit ever did, and does at this day, work in the souls of men! They may talk indeed very loudly and confidently, (a natural fruit of ignorance,) as though they were the only men who understood either the word of God, or the experience of his children. But their words are, in every sense, vain words; they are weighed in the balance, and found wanting.

We may learn from hence, secondly, the real cause why not only many particular persons, but even bodies of men, who were once burning and shining lights, have now lost both their light and heat. If they did not hate and oppose, they, at least, lightly esteemed this precious gospel doctrine. If they did not boldly say, *Abnegationem omnem proculcamus, internecioni damus*; "We trample all self-denial under foot; we devote it to destruc-

¹ Heb. x. 39.² Phil. iii. 14.³ Heb. xii. 3.⁴ Matt. xxii. 29.

tion :” yet they neither valued it according to its high importance, nor took any pains in practising it. *Hanc mystici docent*, said that great, bad man, “The mystic writers teach self-denial.”—No, the inspired writers. And God teaches it to every soul who is willing to hear his voice.

We may learn from hence, thirdly, that it is not enough for a minister of the gospel not to oppose the doctrine of self-denial, to say nothing concerning it. Nay, he cannot satisfy his duty, by saying a little in favour of it. If he would indeed be pure from the blood of all men, he must speak of it, frequently and largely ; he must inculcate the necessity of it in the clearest and strongest manner ; he must press it with all his might, on all persons, at all times, and in all places, laying ‘line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept.’¹ So shall he have a conscience void of offence ; so shall he save his own soul, and those that hear him.

Lastly : see that you apply this, every one of you, to your own souls. Meditate upon it when you are in secret : ponder it in your hearts. Take care not only to understand it thoroughly, but to remember it to your life’s end. Cry unto the strong for strength that you may no sooner understand, than enter upon the practice of it. Delay not the time, but practise it immediately, from this very hour ; practise it universally, on every one of the thousand occasions which will occur in all circumstances of life : practise it daily, without intermission, from the hour you first set your hand to the plough, and perseveringly endure therein to the end, till your spirit return to God.

¹ Is. xxviii, 10.

SERMON VIII.

GOD'S END AND DESIGN IN AFFLICTION.

BY ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

[Robert Leighton was born in 1613. He was made bishop of Dumblane in 1660; in 1669 he was raised to the archiepiscopal see of Glasgow, from which he retired ten years afterwards, and died in 1684.]

S E R M O N VIII.

HOSEA v. 15.

I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face : in their affliction they will seek me early.

THERE is nothing we more hardly learn, and whereof we have more need to be taught, than to judge aright concerning our own dealing with God, and God's dealing with us ; to know and acknowledge the perverseness and folly of our own ways, and the wisdom and goodness of his ways. Therefore, the sermons of the prophets insist much on this, to convince the people of God, to whom they were sent, of both these ; and by this, to persuade them to repentance. This is evidently here the prophet's aim. The whole chapter, with the following, contains a pathetic remonstrance of God's just quarrel with his people, aggravated by much long-suffering and lenity, and many warnings, verbal and real, on his part, and much stubbornness, impenitence, and multiplied provocation on theirs ; he using all means to reclaim and save them, and they using all means to despise him and ruin themselves. The plea is against both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

In these words we have the Lord, after much reasoning and trial of milder ways, which prevailed not with them, concluding upon a severe course, as being found necessary, and such as would be more effectual for their conversion. The words contain these three things: I. The procuring cause of God's afflicting his people. II. His way of afflicting them. III. The end of it.

I. The procuring cause is made up of these two, sin and impenitence. 'I will go till they acknowledge their offences.' So that, if they had not committed those provoking sins, or, having committed them, had humbly acknowledged or repented of them, this labour of afflicting them had been saved; but these sins once committed and often repeated, and their being not so much as once acknowledged, and all this by God's own peculiar people, cannot but draw on heavy afflictions.

1st. We may see how unwilling God is to afflict his people. Judgments are termed 'his strange work,' but mercy is his darling attribute. When God exercises punitive acts against his people, the Scripture represents, as it were, a kind of reluctance and struggling within him. 'How shall I smite thee, O Ephraim? And how shall I give thee up O Manasseh? My repentings are begun already.'¹ He delights in their prosperity, and hath given them a rule, by which if they walk, peace shall be upon them. He hath made them laws, the observance of which will bring heaps of blessings upon them; as we find what a multitude of favours attended it. 'I will give you rain in due season; and a little after, 'I will give you peace in the

¹ Hos. xi. 8.

land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. I will walk among you, I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.'¹ So, also Deut. xxvii. 1—12. But, those laws not being observed, then, it is said, 'The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; the Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies,'² &c. But what is all that when opposed to the affliction here threatened, of God's withdrawing himself? 'I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence.' He will not leave them, unless they drive him away; yea, and he is even then loath to leave them, and grieved that they are such enemies to themselves, and will not be persuaded to be better advised.

2dly. We see where the true blame of the many sufferings and miseries of the church is to be found. The abounding of sin, and the want of repentance, these make her troubles to abound. If God's own people would take his counsel, it would be well for them; either his first counsel of obedience, or his after counsel of repentance. When they are running from him, he calls after them, 'Return, return, O backsliding Israel, why will ye die?' 'Thou hast destroyed thyself,' says the Lord by the same prophet, 'but in me is thy help.'³ His counsel and ways would be peace, but their afflictions and sharp punishments are the fruit of their own ways; bitter fruit and wormwood, a root of bitterness.⁴ Doth not the preaching of the word, and particularly the doctrine of repentance, sufficiently witness for God, and against his

¹ Levit. xxvi. 4.—12.² Deut. 24.

Hos. xiii. 9.

⁴ Prov. v. 9; Jer. ii. 19.

people, when their rebellion brings calamities upon them? The often repeated warnings and entreaties, even to those who have often slighted and despised them, show how unwillingly he afflicts us. He does not surprise them, without warnings multiplied one upon another. Before he would proceed to treat them as enemies, to hew and slay them with the sword, he uses his messengers of peace to deal first with the word, sharply indeed, but graciously, (that sword of the Spirit which kills to make alive,) to spare, if it might be, the destroying sword of the enemy. 'I have hewn them by my prophets;'¹ and if that would have served their turn, the other hewing and slaying should not have followed. A wise enemy, who is resolved to be avenged, conceals his rage till it be accomplished, and does not threaten before he strikes, but makes the execution of his purpose the first revealing of it. Therefore, we may know that God, who doth all things most wisely, intends favour in threatening; denounces indignation that he may be interrupted. Not to inflict it, that is his desire. He would gladly have us stay his hand. A humble, penitent acknowledgment will do it. "He threatens that he may not strike, and strikes that he may not destroy."² If speaking either mildly or sharply, will prevail with his children, he will not stir the rod to them: and when the rod is in his hand, if showing or shaking it will serve the turn, he will not strike with it. But this is our folly, that usually we abuse all this goodness, and will not part with our sins, till we smart for them, and be beaten from

¹ Hos. vi. 5.² *Mmatur ne cœdat, cœdit ne occidat.*

them. We pull punishment out of God's hand ; as Solomon says, 'The fool's mouth calleth for strokes.'¹ When these indulgent ways that the Lord uses avail nothing, then, as a physician wearied in striving with lenitives and gentle medicines, in a fixed, stubborn disease that yields not to them, it is no wonder that he betake himself to sharper remedies, and cut and burn, if need be, that he may cure. The Lord's complaint, in the beginning of the seventh chapter of this prophecy, sounds this way : 'When I would have healed Ephraim.' If it be thus, then, with the church of God, that it is often found guilty of great sins, and, withal, great insensibleness and impenitence, it is no wonder that it is often found under great and many afflictions. There being in the church, in such societies as profess God's name, peculiar sins, such as are found nowhere else, by reason of God's peculiar covenant with them, and ordinances among them ; viz. contempt of the ordinances, and breach of the covenant ; and, by the same reason too, peculiar aggravations of the common sins, and ingredients of such things as make the same sins that other people commit, to be of a deeper dye among God's people ; their special relation to him, and the special means and mercies they receive from him, by which they are both more instructed and more obliged to obedience ; these things make the disobedience more heinous in itself, and more offensive to God. He cannot but take it very ill to be disregarded by his own : *Kαὶ σὺ τέκνον*. Thus the Lord makes a great and loud complaint that all may hear ; calls heaven and earth to hear it, that

¹ Prov. xviii. 6.

he had 'nourished and brought up children, and they had rebelled against him.'¹ What do we deserve for our sins? Do not our oaths and cursing, our pride and deceit, our wonderful ignorance and profaneness, our formality, hypocrisy, and, above all, our deep security, threaten us with some heavy judgment? Which cannot be avoided but by godly sorrow and earnest prayer, by the most humble way of acknowledgment and real amendment. This is our work at this time; and, unless we set about it for ourselves, and pray for it to our brethren, we know not what we are doing. We cannot do any thing to purpose in behalf of the church of God, nor be fit supplicants for its deliverance, whilst we remain ungodly ourselves.

II. God's way of afflicting his people: 'I will go and return to my place.' The way that he will afflict them is indeed the heaviest, as conveyed in this expression: as if he should say, I will withdraw myself from them, and will not appear to them at all for a time, yea, a long time. Well may it be rendered by 'affliction' in the other clause, for they shall be truly so when the Lord is gone from them. Upon the withdrawing of his gracious presence, as necessarily follows affliction, as mist upon the setting of the sun. This was heavier than all his corrections. So long as they could but hear and see him amongst them, although it were chiding, yea, scourging them, yet, still there was this comfort, that they might speak to him as being near him, and so, considering his merciful nature, might have hope, by their complaints and cries in his presence, to move him to compassionate and

¹ Isaiah, i. 2.

spare them, and be reconciled. But when he was out of sight and quite gone from them, and so could neither hear nor see them in their misery, this was indeed the chief misery, worse than all that they could suffer in other punishments. In the preceding verses, he threatens to be as a moth to them, consuming them, though more slowly and insensibly; which was by lesser judgments that befel these kingdoms, as the history of them shows: then, as a lion, devouring more suddenly: but the gradation rises to the highest in this last, though to an ignorant creature it sounds least: 'I will return to my place.' I will retire my favourable presence from them, and shut up all the influences and evidences of my grace. Which, in a public, national sense, (as here it is to be taken,) imports, not only longer and more grievous troubles than any which before had befallen them, (as indeed they were,) but God's leaving of them in those troubles, and not giving, as before, any sign of his merciful presence. As if God should say, I will give them up to those miseries that are to come upon them, and leave them to themselves and to their cruel enemies, and will take no notice of them, until they know what a grievous thing the want of my presence is, and how hateful their sins are, that have deprived them of it, and so be stirred up to seek my face;—they would not regard me, either in my word or in my works, whether of mercy or of judgment, so long as I stayed with them, was present amongst them:—that so I may teach them to know what is the good of my presence, by the evil of my absence, which is a heavier judgment than all I have yet inflicted on them.

And as it is thus in relation to the public condi-

tion of the church, so is it, in a personal and more spiritual sense, to a child of God. No evil he fears so much, or feels so heavy, as God's absenting and withdrawing himself in displeasure; nor is there any good that he will admit to be compared with the light of God's countenance. Let others seek any good, let them have any good they can, but, says David, for himself and all the godly, the good we seek, is this and no other, 'Lord, lift upon us the light of thy countenance.'¹ He can hear of any distress with courage and resolution, but this he cannot endure to hear of, but deprecates it, 'hide not thy face from thy servant.' A godly man may, in the most prosperous condition, have much concern if the face of God be hid from him. That is his great affliction, as it is here called. There needs nothing else to damp all his prosperity. 'Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.'² Even in prosperity, riches and power, and other such poor things, do not answer the desires of a soul acquainted with God: all these are nothing without his favour shining on them: no, nor the graces which are within them, which are far more precious than all outward things. The displeased withdrawing of God's countenance, makes a sad night amid all these; as, when the sun is absent, it is night still, notwithstanding all the stars. Although God lay outward affliction on them, yet, if he enlighten them, though in a dungeon, they can rejoice. Yea, when they are inwardly troubled for sin, and God is rebuking them that way, yet, that is not so bad as when he leaves them and 'returns to his place.' This is more griev-

¹ Psalm iv. 6.² Ibid. xxx. 7.

ous than when he chides and rebukes them, which he may do, and yet, not in 'hot displeasure,' as David teaches us to distinguish it.¹ It is a more comfortable condition, that he stay with them, and that he reprove them when they sin, (yea, that is a mercy,) than that he leave them, and speak not to them, nor suffer them to speak to him. They would then desire rather to find him present though correcting; for then, by speaking to him, they may express their repentance and requests to him for pardon. They would say to God, 'Strike me, but hear me;' rather than be struck out from all intercourse with him, and he hold them as his enemies. And thus God may sometimes deal with his own, and particularly for some notable offence, until they be duly humbled and brought to a lowly acknowledgment, and so, to seek his face again; to see if they will be loath to grieve him again

Though we all profess to know God, yet, the greatest part of us are so far from duly esteeming him, that we do not at all know what the spiritual, gracious presence of God is; how sweet the enjoyment, and how bitter and sad the deprivation. Oh, be desirous to understand and know this highest good, and, above all things, seek to enjoy it. And without doubt, the experience of it will persuade you to prize it and entertain it carefully; never willingly to grieve and drive away so great and so good a guest, who brings true happiness along with him to those with whom he dwells. There is solid peace, and there only, where he is. And for the church of God, what other thing can we, yea, what need we desire but this, as the assured help of

¹ Psalm vi. 1

all her distresses and sorrows, that God would return his gracious presence to her again? Then shall her enemies be turned backward, and she shall sing and rejoice in the God of her salvation. You see, this is the church's own prayer:¹ she desires no more than this, 'Cause thy face to shine; and we shall be safe.' That is the only sun which chases away the mist of her griefs and troubles. So then, the ending of these confusions we are lying and labouring under, is wrapped up in this; that the presence of our God be both entreated and obtained. This would make a sweet union of hearts, and make all attempts prosperous, and strike a terror into the church's enemies. But if their Rock forsake them, were they never so surely supported with other advantages, yet shall they sink and fall. If he 'go to his place,' and shut up his power and wisdom from their help, and leave them with themselves, this shall suffice to undo them, without any enemy. It was sad news, not only to Moses, but to the whole people; notwithstanding they were bent to provoke him to do so, it was very grievous for them to hear, that he had refused them his own guidance, and would withdraw himself from them, although it was with the promise of an angel to lead them; for little can any possible supply be made by any creature to make up that loss. It was indeed high time for them to put off their ornaments, and be humbled, when their great ornament and their great strength was gone from them in displeasure. Then they put off their garbs of war, and appeared in the penitential dress of sackcloth and ashes.²

¹ Psalm lxxx. 3. ² Exod. xxxiii. 4—6.

III. The end of God's thus afflicting his people. And we have these two things to consider in it, both here clearly expressed; 1st, God's intention in the means; 2dly, The power of these means for effecting it. 'I will go till they acknowledge their offences and seek my face,' and, in the time of my absence, which will certainly be the time of their heaviest affliction, 'they will seek me early.'

1. This is God's end in scourging his people: it is only to bring them to a sorrow for their offences, and an ingenuous confession of it. And if he withdraw himself, it is not to leave them for ever and look at them no more. On the contrary, it is, that they may learn whether it is better to enjoy him, or their sins; and that, finding themselves miserable without him, they may leave those sins with which he will not dwell, and may come and entreat his return to them; which he is willing, being entreated to grant them. And this he removes from them, that, on their return to him, and their earnest and humble seeking of his return to them, they may find him, and enjoy more of his presence than before, and learn to keep it better. He throws his people into the furnace, and goes away, and leaves them there; yet, it is not to let them lie still there, but he is skilful in this work, and knows the time needful for their refining, and then returns and takes them out. His purpose is, to purge away the dross, but he will not lose the gold. 'By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this will serve to take away his sin.'¹ As that sin was the meriting cause of the affliction, it clears God's justice; the end he aims at, when

¹ Isaiah, xxvii. 9.

he declares his graciousness and mercy to his people, being no other than this, to destroy the meriting cause of the affliction, by their trouble; to take away that sin which procured it, and then to give them peace. That is his design. He takes no pleasure in their affliction for itself, more than they themselves do. Indeed, in punishing his enemies, there is pure justice: their punishments are not for a better end, so far as concerns them, but are appointed to torment them. But to his own people his purpose is, by afflicting them, only to draw them from their sins, which drive him away from them. And as we see in this the bounty of God, so it instructs us, for our own practice, in the just way both of preventing trouble to ourselves that it come not, and of removing it if it be come upon us. Is this the thing God seeks in punishing us, a sense and acknowledgment of sin committed? Then, if we give him his end, he will not at all needlessly make use of the means. If, therefore, we either carefully shun sinful provocations, or, being guilty, speedily return and humble ourselves before him, he will not enter into displeasure against us; he will be appeased towards us. And on our seeing that which is his intent in punishing, before he begins to punish, he is very well pleased to be thus prevented. So then, if either we follow the advice of the psalmist, 'Stand in awe and sin not,'¹ or that other which follows, that we 'examine our hearts' concerning sin, before the decree of punishment go forth, or be put in execution on our guiltiness, pronouncing ourselves guilty, (as the word is here in the text,) which is indeed acknow-

¹ Psalm iv. 4.

ledging our offences—this is the way to prevent it; and, if it be begun upon us, this is the ready way to remove it, for this is the end of it. When the Lord sees his children grieved for their offences and entreating pardon, he is a tender-hearted father, the very ‘Father of mercies.’ Those confessions and prayers that his children utter, enter his paternal ears; the rod falls out of his hand, and he turns his stripes into embraces, and his frowns into smiling. There may be, indeed, a confused cry from the sense of the smart, without repentance, that moves him not. As he directs parents in correcting a peevish child, ‘Thou shalt not spare for his crying,’¹ so, he himself doth not spare nor leave off for that kind of crying. It is confession and submission that he seeks, not the howling and complaining which nature draws from any under sharp affliction. This, the Lord complains of in his people, by the same prophet. ‘They did not cry unto me with their hearts; they only howled upon their beds.’² A man that is upon the rack for extorting confession will cry and roar when he confesses nothing; but it is not that which is sought of him; pain forces him to that: it is confession; and when he begins the least word of that, they presently stay and release him. Thus it was with David, and he tells it us, and distinguishes these two expressly.³ He tells us of his ‘roaring’ under the hand of God, but that did no good: he found no ease by that, so long as he kept silence from this confession. But as soon as he began, or did but offer at acknowledgment, one word of con-

¹ Prov. xix. 18.² Hos. vii. 14.³ Psalm xxxii. 3—5.

fession, yea, the promise of it, brought him the release that a whole day's roaring could not obtain. 'I roared all day long,' but thou helpedst me not; still 'thy hand continued heavy upon me.' But I 'acknowledged my sin; I said, I would confess my transgression, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.'

Now, to the end we may confess aright, there must be a searching of our hearts for our sins, and for some particular one or more which God's afflictions aim at. And, first, if we cannot easily find it out, consider the nature of the affliction. Secondly, seek the knowledge of it from God, who will readily, when he corrects his children, tell them what fault it is. Thirdly, however, finding so many, be sure to spare none of them, and then ye cannot but fall on the main one which breedeth you trouble.

2. The other thing here concerning the end of affliction, is, the efficacy of the means for reaching it: 'In their affliction they will seek me early.' It had been early, in a wiser sense, to have sought to him for a reconcilment before the affliction; but here it expresses a most diligent seeking, according to the original word; for things that men are earnest upon, they will be early stirring to set about. For, besides that is a certain prophecy of what was to come to pass in this people, it hath in it this general truth, with which it agrees; to wit, the moral fitness of great affliction to work this diligent seeking of God, before neglected, and acknowledgment of sin, before unfelt; which is expressed in the former clause. Together with seeking his face, there must be the sense and acknowledgment of sin. There is no returning to him, but from it.

In following sin, we depart from God, and by forsaking it, we return to him. These are inseparable; they are but one motion. It was their sin made him leave them and go to his place; and therefore it were in vain to seek him, retaining it, for that would drive him further from them.

Now, affliction is apt to bring men to this; such, I mean, as have any knowledge of God. Although they be not converted, yet, it works them to a temporary fit of returning and seeking God, such as they are capable of. And those make up the greatest part in the public humblings of a nation, or any multitude of people, having most of them no more heat of devotion and desire of God, than the fit of present affliction works; and therefore, when that ceases, they have done likewise with their repentance and regard of God. Being stirred only by that outward principle, they act no longer that way, than while they acted by it. Water will be very hot, yea, boil and make a noise, when it is upon the fire; but set it off, and it returns, within a while, to its natural coldness. Thus it was often with the same people. See Psalm lxxviii. And there are still daily too many instances of it. Yet the Lord, to show how much regard he hath to repentance, lets not the very semblance of it go to loss. He is pleased, for the repressing of sin, and the purging of his church of gross and scandalous profaneness, to make use of public afflictions to work in many even this kind of repentance, and to answer this repentance with the removal of the affliction that wrought it. With God's own children, this method holds in a way peculiar to them. They may, indeed, as well as others, sometimes stand in need of the rod for their bettering, and it

may work it, but there is this difference; their grief for sin and seeking after God, do not wholly depend on the lash; they are constant in these things, as having a living principle within them; whence they show, in all estates, that sin is to them the greatest grief, and the favour of God the greatest good. Again, when they are surprised with sin, and possibly fall into a fit of security, and must be awaked by some affliction, and it is sent for that purpose, that renewing which it works in them, is not, as in others, a mere present violent motion only, from the impulse of the affliction, but it is real and inward from the grace which is in them, awaked and only set on work by the correction; and therefore it is more abiding than the other. There is in them a special love to God, working their repentings and returning under the sense of his hand. And it is from God's special love to them, which others share not in, that he stirs them up to renew repentance, and upon their repentance takes off affliction, and shows himself graciously reconciled to them. To some, likewise, it may be, that God may use some particular cross, as a partial and concurring means to the work of their repentance and conversion to God. But, however, there is in that, some peculiar love of God, and that effectual working of his word and Spirit to beget grace in them, by which afflictions are sanctioned and made useful to excite and awaken grace where it is.

Now, in all these different ways, affliction is apt for this effect: 1st. Because it sets men in upon themselves, calls in their thoughts, which, in a fair season, more readily dissipate and scatter themselves abroad. As they observe, that much light disqualifies the sight of the mind, as well as that of

the body, and that in the dark, men's thoughts are more united and deep; thus, in the darkness of affliction, we feel readily more inwards, and that acquaints us better with ourselves and our sins, and so tends to the first of these two, the acknowledging of our offences. Besides, the particular respect we speak of, is often betwixt the kind of affliction and our own sins.

2dly. When a man is driven by force from the comforts of the world, which he used to hinge upon, especially by some great affliction which breaks him off from them all, then, if he have any thoughts concerning God, those begin to work with him. He bethinks himself for no other way of help, but thinks, Could I obtain the Lord to befriend me, and show me his favour, that were enough. He could deliver me out of this distress, and in the mean time support me under it. True, I have provoked him, and, which is heavier than all my other troubles, I have made him mine enemy; yet, I know he is very compassionate and gracious, therefore I will go to him, and confess my offence, and I trust he will pardon me. This is the other thing, the seeking of his face. So, affliction hath something in it suitable to the work of both. As we see, the lost son by his distress came to himself, and then resolved to return to his father. Indeed, when a man is straitened on all hands by a crowd of troubles, and finds no way out, then he finds his only way is upward. We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee. The Israelites went before to other helpers; they are reprov'd for it;¹ but when once convinced

¹ Verse 13.

of that folly, no more of any such way, but, as follows in the next words containing a description of their purposes, 'Come, let us return to the Lord our God,' they acknowledge him as the just inflicter of these calamities: 'he hath torn,' and 'he hath smitten.' Not a word of Salmanazer or Nebuchadnezzar, but their offended God is their smiter, and so, no recourse to other powers for this deliverance, but, 'Let us return to him; he will heal us.' Oh, then, let us all be persuaded to repentance. And certainly, all they who do truly mind the honour of God, and the good of his church, will not be negligent at such a time as this. I trust, that God who heareth prayer, will have regard to their prayers and his own glory. Amen.

SERMON IX.
ON SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

BY DR. BARROW.

[ISAAC BARROW was born in 1630. In 1672 he was made master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and died in 1677.]

1875 - 1876

1876 - 1877

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1878 - 1879

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1883 - 1884

1884 - 1885

S E R M O N I X.

LUKE, XXII. 42.

Nevertheless let not my will, but thine, be done.

THE great controversy, managed with such earnestness and obstinacy between God and man, is this—whose will shall take place, his or ours. Almighty God, by whose constant protection and great mercy we subsist, doth claim to himself the authority of regulating our practice, and disposing our fortunes; but we affect to be our own masters and carvers; not willingly admitting any law, not patiently brooking any condition, which doth not sort with our fancy and pleasure: to make good his right, God bendeth all his forces, and applieth all proper means both of sweetness and severity; (persuading us by arguments, soliciting us by entreaties, alluring us by fair promises, scaring us by fierce menaces, indulging ample benefits to us, inflicting sore corrections on us, working in us and upon us by secret influences of grace, by visible dispensations of providence;) yet so it is, that

commonly nothing doth avail, our will opposing itself with invincible resolution and stiffness.

Here indeed the business pincheth; herein as the chief worth, so the main difficulty of religious practice consisteth, in bending that iron sinew; in bringing our proud hearts to stoop, and our sturdy humours to buckle, so as to surrender and resign our wills to the just, the wise, the gracious will of our God, prescribing our duty, and assigning our lot unto us. We may accuse our nature, but it is our pleasure—we may pretend weakness, but it is wilfulness, which is the guilty cause of our misdemeanours; for by God's help (which doth always prevent our needs, and is never wanting to those who seriously desire it) we may be as good as we please, if we can please to be good.¹ There is nothing within us that can resist, if our wills do yield themselves up to duty: to conquer our reason is not hard; for what reason of man can withstand the infinite cogency of those motives, which induce to obedience? What can be more easy, than by a thousand arguments, clear as day, to convince any man, that to cross God's will is the greatest absurdity in the world, and that there is no madness comparable thereto?² Nor is it difficult, if we resolve upon it, to govern any other part or power of our nature; for what cannot we do, if we are willing? what inclination cannot we check, what appetite cannot we restrain, what passion cannot we quell or moderate? what faculty of our soul, or member of our body is not obsequious to

¹ Chrys. tom. vi. Or. 12, in 1 Cor. Or. 17, tom. v. Or. 28, 43.

² Sen. de Ira, ii. 12.

our will? Even half the resolution with which we pursue vanity and sin, would serve to engage us in the ways of wisdom and virtue.

Wherefore in overcoming our will the stress lieth: this is that impregnable fortress, which everlastingly doth hold out against all the batteries of reason and of grace; which no force of persuasion, no allurements of favour, no discouragement of terror can reduce: this puny, this impotent thing it is, which grappleth with Omnipotency, and often in a manner baffleth it. And no wonder; for that God doth not intend to overpower our will, or to make any violent impression on it, but only to 'draw it (as it is in the Prophet,¹) with the cords of a man,' or by rational inducements to win its consent and compliance: our service is not so considerable to him, that he should extort it from us; nor doth he value our happiness at so low a rate, as to obtrude it on us. His victory indeed were no true victory over us, if he should gain it by main force, or without the concurrence of our will: our works not being our works, if they do not issue from our will; and our will not being our will, if it be not free; to compel it were to destroy it, together with all the worth of our virtue and obedience. Wherefore the Almighty doth suffer himself to be withstood, and beareth repulses from us; nor commonly doth he master our will otherwise, than by its own spontaneous conversion and submission to him: if ever we be conquered, as we shall share in the benefit, and wear a crown; so we must join in the combat, and partake of the victory, by subduing ourselves: 'we must take the

¹ Hosea, xi. 4.

yoke upon us;' for God is only served by volunteers; he summoneth us by his word, he attracteth us by his grace, but we must 'freely come unto him.'

Our will indeed of all things is most our own—the only gift, the most proper sacrifice we have to offer; which therefore God doth chiefly desire, doth most highly prize, doth most kindly accept from us. Seeing then our duty chiefly moveth on this hinge, the free submission and resignation of our will to the will of God; it is this practice, which our Lord (who came to guide us in the way to happiness, not only as a teacher by his word and excellent doctrine, but as a leader, by his actions and perfect example) did especially set before us; as in the constant tenor of his life, so particularly in that great exigency which occasioned these words, wherein, renouncing and deprecating his own will, he did express an entire submission to God's will, a hearty complacence therein, and a serious desire that it might take place.

For the fuller understanding of which case, we may consider, that our Lord, as partaker of our nature, and, 'in all things (bating sin) like unto us,' had a natural human will, attended with senses, appetites, and affections, apt from objects incident to receive congruous impressions of pleasure and pain; so that whatever is innocently grateful and pleasant to us, that he relished with delight, and thence did incline to embrace; whatever is distasteful and afflictive to us, that he resented with grief, and thence was moved to es-

¹ Ἐπεὶ τῷτο καὶ ἀντὰ διαβάλλει τὰ ἀγαθὰ εἰ μὴ τοιαυτῇ αὐτῶν ἐσιν ἡ φύσις, ὡς καὶ ἐκόντος προσδραμεῖν, καὶ χάριν ἔχειν πολλήν.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. 2.

chew. To this probably he was liable in a degree beyond our ordinary rate; for that in him nature was most perfect, his complexion very delicate, his temper exquisitely sound and fine; for so we find, that by how much any man's constitution is more sound, by so much he hath a smarter gust of what is agreeable or offensive. If this be deemed weakness, it is a weakness connected with our nature, which he therewith did take, and 'with which (as the apostle saith) 'he was encompassed.'¹ Such a will our Lord had, and it was requisite that he should have it, that he thence might be qualified to discharge the principal instances of obedience, for procuring God's favour to us, and for setting an exact pattern before us; for God imposing on him duties to perform, and dispensing accidents to endure, very cross to that natural will, in his compliance and acquiescence thereto his obedience was thoroughly tried; his virtue did shine most brightly; therefore (as the apostle saith) 'he was in all points tempted';² thence, as to meritorious capacity, and exemplary influence, 'he was perfected through suffering.'³

Hence was the whole course of his life and conversation among men, so designed, so modelled, as to be one continual exercise of thwarting that human will, and closing with the divine pleasure: it was predicted of him, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God';⁴ and of himself he affirmed, 'I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me';⁵ whereas therefore such a prac-

¹ Ἐπεὶ ὃ αὐτὸς περίκειται ἀσθένειαν.—Heb. v. 2.

² Heb. iv. 15. ³ Ib. ii. 10, 18.

⁴ Heb. x. 7; Psalm xl. 7.

⁵ John, vi. 38; v. 30; iv. 34.

tice is little seen in achieving easy matters, or in admitting pleasant occurrences; it was ordered for him, that he should encounter the roughest difficulties, and be engaged in circumstances most harsh to natural apprehension and appetite; so that if we trace the footsteps of his life from the sordid manger to the bloody cross, we can hardly mark any thing to have befallen him apt to satisfy the will of nature.

Nature liketh respect, and loatheth contempt: therefore was he born of mean parentage, and in a most homely condition; therefore did he live in no garb, did assume no office, did exercise no power, did meddle in no affairs, which procure to men consideration and regard; therefore an imposter, a blasphemer, a sorcerer, a loose companion, a seditious incendiary, were the titles of honour and the eulogies of praise conferred on him; therefore was he exposed to the lash of every slanderous, every scurrilous, every petulant and ungoverned tongue.

Nature doth affect the good opinion, and good will of men, especially when due in grateful return for great courtesy and beneficence; nor doth any thing more grate thereon, than abuse of kindness: therefore, could he (the world's great friend and benefactor) say 'the world hateth me:'¹ therefore were those, whom he with so much charity and bounty had instructed, had fed, had cured of diseases (both corporal and spiritual) so ready to clamour, and commit outrage upon him; therefore could he thus expostulate, 'Many good works have I showed you from my Father, for which of those works do

¹ John, vii. 7.

ye stone me?'¹ therefore did his kindred slight him, therefore did his disciples abandon him, therefore did the grand traitor issue from his own bosom;² therefore did that whole nation, which he chiefly sought and laboured to save, conspire to persecute him, with most rancorous spite and cruel misusage.

Nature loveth plentiful accommodations, and abhorreth to be pinched with any want: therefore was extreme penury appointed to him: he had no revenue, no estate, no certain livelihood, not 'so much as a house where to lay his head,'³ or a piece of money to discharge the tax for it; he owed his ordinary support to alms, or voluntary beneficence; he was to seek his food from 'a fig-tree on the way';⁴ and sometimes was beholden for it to the courtesy of publicans; δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπρώχενσε, 'he was,' saith St. Paul, 'a beggar for us.'⁵

Nature delighteth in ease, in quiet, in liberty: therefore did he spend his days in continual labour, in restless travel, in endless vagrancy, 'going about and doing good';⁶ ever hastening thither, whither the needs of men did call, or their benefit invite; therefore did he 'take on him the form of a servant,'⁷ and was among his own followers 'as one that ministereth';⁸ therefore he 'pleased not himself,'⁹ but suited his demeanour to the state and circumstances of things, complied with the manners and fashions, comported with the humours and infirmities of men.

Nature coveteth good success to its design and

¹ John, x. 32.

² Ib. xiii. 18.

³ Matt. viii. 20.

⁴ Matt. xxi. 19.

⁵ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

⁶ Matt. iv. 23; viii. 35; Acts, x. 38.

⁷ Phil. ii. 7.

⁸ Luke, xxii. 27.

⁹ Rom. xv. 3.

undertakings, hardly brooking to be disappointed and defeated in them : therefore was he put to water dry sticks, and to wash negroes ; that is, to instruct a most dull and stupid, to reform a most perverse and stubborn generation ; therefore his ardent desires, his solicitous cares, his painful endeavours for the good of men did obtain so little fruit ; had indeed a contrary effect, rather aggravating their sins than removing them, rather hardening than turning their hearts, rather plunging them deeper into perdition, than rescuing them from it. Therefore so much in vain did he, in numberless miraculous works, display his power and goodness, convincing few, converting fewer by them ; therefore, although he taught with most powerful authority, with most charming gracefulness, with most convincing evidence, yet, ‘ Who (could he say) hath believed our report ? ’¹ though he most earnestly did invite and allure men to him, offering the richest boons that heaven itself could dispense, yet, ‘ Ye will not (was he forced to say) come unto me, that ye may be saved ; ’² although with assiduous fervency of affection he strove to reclaim them from courses tending to their ruin, yet how he prospered, sad experience declareth, and we may learn from that doleful complaint, ‘ How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not : ’³ ἐκ ἡθελήσατε, your will did not concur, your will did not submit.

In fine, natural will seeketh pleasure, and shunneth pain ; but what pleasure did he taste ; what

¹ John, xii. 37, 38.

² John, v. 40.

³ Luke, xiii. 34.

inclination, what appetite, what sense did he gratify? How did he feast, or revel? How, but in tedious fastings, in frequent hungers, by passing whole nights in prayer, and retirement for devotion upon the cold mountains? What sports had he, what recreation did he take, but feeling incessant gripes of compassion, and wearisome roving in quest of the lost sheep? In what conversation could he divert himself, but among those, whose doltish incapacity, and forward humour, did wring from his patience those words, 'How long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you?'¹ What music did he hear, but the rattlings of clamorous obloquy, and furious accusations against him? to be desperately maligned, to be insolently mocked, to be styled a king, and treated as a slave; to be spit on, to be buffeted, to be scourged, to be drenched with gall, to be crowned with thorns, to be nailed to a cross; these were the delights which our Lord enjoyed, these the sweet comforts of his life, and the notable prosperities of his fortune: such a portion was allotted to him, the which he did accept from God's hand with all patient submission, with perfect contentedness, with exceeding alacrity, never repining at it, never complaining of it, never flinching from it, or fainting under it; but proceeding on in the performance of all his duty, and prosecution of his great designs, with undaunted courage, with unwearied industry, with undisturbed tranquillity and satisfaction of mind.

Had indeed his condition and fortune been otherwise framed; had he come into the world qualified with a noble extraction; had he lived in a

¹ Matt. xvii. 17.

splendid equipage, had he enjoyed a plentiful estate and a fair reputation, had he been favoured and caressed by men ; had he found a current of prosperous success, had safety, ease and pleasure waited on him ; where had been the pious resignation of his will, where the precious merit of his obedience, where the glorious lustre of his example ? how then had our frailty in him become victorious over all his enemies ? how had he triumphed over the solicitations and allurements of the flesh ; over the frowns and flatteries of the world ; over the malice and fury of hell ? how then could he have so demonstrated his immense charity toward us, or laid so mighty obligations upon us ?

Such in general was the case, and such the deportment of our Lord ; but there was somewhat peculiar, and beyond all this occurring to him, which drew forth the words of our text. God had tempered for him a potion of all the most bitter and loathsome ingredients that could be ; a drop whereof no man ever hath, or could endure to sip ; for he was not only to undergo whatever load human rage could impose ; of ignominious disgrace, and grievous pain ; but to feel dismal agonies of spirit, and those ‘ unknown sufferings,’ which God alone could inflict, God only could sustain : ‘ Behold, and see,’ he might well say, ‘ if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me ; wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger ?’¹ He was to labour with pangs of charity, and through his heart to be pierced with deepest commiseration of our wretched case : he was to crouch under the burden of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and

¹ I. am. i. 12.

abominations) ever committed by mankind : he was to pass through the hottest furnace of divine vengeance, and by his blood to quench the wrath of heaven flaming out against iniquity ; he was to stand (as it were) before the mouth of hell, belching fire and brimstone on his face : his grief was to supply the defects of our remorse, and his suffering in those few moments to countervail the eternal torments due to us : he was to bear the hiding of God's face, and an eclipse of that favourable aspect, in which all bliss doth reside ; a case which he that so perfectly understood it, could not but infinitely resent. These things with the clearest apprehension he saw coming on him ; and no wonder that our nature started at so ghastly a sight, or that human instinct should dictate that petition, 'Father, if thou wilt, let this cup pass from me,'— words implying his most real participation of our infirmity ; words denoting the height of those sad evils which encompassed him with his lively and lowly resentment of them ; words informing us, how we should entertain God's chastisements, and whence we must seek relief of our pressures ; (that we should receive them, not with a scornful neglect, or sullen insensibility, but with a meek contrition of soul ; that we should entirely depend on God's pleasure for support under them, or a releasement from them ;) words which, in conjunction with those following, do show how instantly we should quash and overrule any insurrection of natural desire against the command or providence of God. We must not take that prayer to signify any purpose in our Lord to shift off his passion, or any wavering in resolution about it ; for he could not any wise mean to undo that, which he knew

done with God before the world's foundation ; he would not unsettle that, which was by his own free undertaking, and irreversible decree. He that so often with satisfaction did foretel this event, who with so ' earnest desire,'¹ longed for its approach ; who with that sharpness of indignation did rebuke his friend offering to divert him from it ; who did again repress St. Peter's animosity with that serious expostulation, ' The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?'² who had advisedly laid such trains for its accomplishment—would he decline it ? Could that heart, all burning with zeal for God and charity to men, admit the least thought or motion of averseness from drinking that cup, which was the sovereign medicine administered by divine wisdom, for the recovery of God's creation ? No : had he spake with such intent, legions of angels had flown to his rescue ; that word, which framed the worlds, which stilled the tempests, which ejected devils, would immediately have scattered his enemies, and dashed all their projects against him. Wherefore those words did not proceed from intention, but as from instinct, and for instruction ; importing, that what our human frailty was apt to suggest, that his divine virtue was more ready to smother ; neither did he vent the former, but that he might express the latter. He did express it in real effect ; immediately with all readiness addressing himself to receive that unsavoury potion. He reached out his hand for it, yielding fair opportunity and advantages to his persecutors ; he lifted it up to his mouth, innocently provoking

¹ *Ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμειν*.—Luke, xxii. 15.

² John, xviii. 11.

their envy and malice ; he drank it off with a most steady calmness, and sweet composure of mind, with the silence, the simplicity, the meekness of a lamb, carried to the slaughter ; no fretful thought rising up, no angry word breaking forth, but a clear patience, enlivened with a warm charity, shining in all his behaviour, and through every circumstance of his passion.

Such in his life, such at his death, was the practice of our Lord ; in conformity whereto we also readily should undertake whatever God proposeth, we gladly should accept whatever God offereth, we vigorously should perform whatever God enjoineeth, we patiently should undergo whatever God imposeth or inflicteth, how cross soever any duty, any dispensation may prove to our carnal sense or humour.

To do thus, the contemplation of this example may strongly engage us. For if our Lord had not his will, can we in reason expect, can we in modesty desire, to have ours ? Must we be cockered and pleased in every thing, when as he was treated so coarsely, and crossed in all things ? can we grudge at any kind of service, or sufferance ? can we think much (for our trial, our exercise, our correction) to bear a little want, a little disgrace, a little pain, when the Son of God was put to discharge the hardest tasks, to endure the sorest adversities ?

But further to enforce these duties, be pleased to cast a glance on two considerations. First, What the will is to which,—Secondly, Who the willer is to whom, we must submit.

1. What is the will of God ? Is it any thing unjust, unworthy, or dishonourable, any thing in-

commodious or hurtful, any thing extremely difficult, or intolerably grievous, that God requireth of us to do or bear? No: he willeth nothing from us, or to us, which doth not best become us, and most behove us; which is not attended with safety, with ease, with the solidest profit, the fairest reputation, and the sweetest pleasure.

Two things he willeth,—that we should be good, and that we should be happy; the first in order to the second; for that virtue is the certain way, and a necessary qualification to felicity.

‘The will of God,’ saith St. Paul, ‘is our sanctification:’¹ what is that? What, but that the decays of our frame, and the defacements of God’s image within us, should be repaired; that the faculties of our soul should be restored to their original integrity and vigour; that from most wretched slaveries we should be translated into a happy freedom, yea, into a glorious kingdom; that from despicable beggary and baseness we should be advanced to substantial wealth, and sublime dignity; that we should be cleansed from the foulest defilements, and decked with the goodliest ornaments; that we should be cured of most loathsome diseases, and settled in a firm health of soul; that we should be delivered from those brutish lusts, and those devilish passions, which create in us a hell of darkness, of confusion, of vexation,—which dishonour our nature, deform our soul, ruffle our mind, and rack our conscience; that we should be endowed with those worthy dispositions and affections, which do constitute in our hearts a heaven of light, of order, of joy and peace,—dignify our nature,

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 3.

beautify our soul, clarify and cheer our mind; that we should eschew those practices, which never go without a retinue of woful mischiefs and sorrows, embracing those which always yield abundant fruits of convenience and comfort; that in short, we should become friends of God, fit to converse with angels, and capable of paradise.

‘God,’ saith St. Paul again, ‘willeth all men to be saved;’¹ ‘He willeth not,’ saith St. Peter, ‘that any man should perish;’² He saith it himself, yea, he sweareth it, ‘that he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live.’³ And what is this will? What, but that we should obtain all the good whereof we are capable; that we should be filled with joy, and crowned with glory; that we should be fixed in an immovable state of happiness, in the perpetual enjoyment of God’s favour, and in the light of his blissful presence: that we should be rid of all the evils to which we are liable; that we should be released from inextricable chains of guilt, from incurable stings of remorse, from being irrecoverably engaged to pass a disconsolate eternity in utter darkness and extreme woe? Such is God’s will; to such purposes every command, every dispensation of God (how grim, how rough soever it may seem) doth tend: and do we refuse to comply with that good will? do we set against it a will of our own, affecting things unworthy of us, things unprofitable to us, things prejudicial to our best interests, things utterly baneful to our souls? Do we reject the will that would save us, and adhere to a will that would

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 4.

² 2 Pet. iii. 9.

³ Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

ruin us; a foolish and a senseless will, which, slighting the immense treasures of heaven, the unfading glories of God's kingdom, the ineffable joys of eternity, doth catch at specious nothings, doth pursue mischievous trifles; a shadow of base profit a smoke of vain honour, a flash of sordid pleasure; which passeth away like 'the mirth of fools,' or 'the crackling of thorns,'¹ leaving only soot, black and bitter, behind it.

But at least ere we do thus, let us consider, whose will it is, that requireth our compliance.

It is the will of him, whose will did found the earth, and rear the heaven;² whose will sustaineth all things in their existence and operation; whose will is the great law of the world, which universal nature in all its motions doth observe; which reigneth in heaven, the blessed spirits adoring it, which swayeth in hell itself, the cursed fiends trembling at it: and shall we alone (we pitiful worms crawling on earth) presume to murmur, or dare to kick against it?

It is the will of our Maker, who together with all our other faculties did create and confer on us the very power of willing: and shall we turn the work of his hands, the gift of his bounty against him?

It is the will of our Preserver, who together with all that we are or have, continually doth uphold our very will itself; so that without employing any positive force, merely by letting us fall out of his hand, he can send us and it back to nothing: and shall our will clash with that, on which it so wholly dependeth; without which it cannot subsist one moment, or move one step forward in action?

¹ Eccles. vii. 6.

² Psalm cxlviii. 5; Apoc. iv. 11.

It is the will of our sovereign Lord, who upon various indisputable accounts hath a just right to govern us, and an absolute power to dispose of us: ought we not therefore to say with old Eli, 'It is the Lord, let him do to me as it seemeth good to him?'¹ Is it not extreme iniquity, is it not monstrous arrogance for us, in derogation to his will, to pretend giving law, or picking a station to ourselves? Do we not manifestly incur high-treason against the King of Heaven by so invading his office, usurping his authority, snatching his sceptre into our hands, and setting our wills in his throne?

It is the will of our Judge, from whose mouth our doom must proceed, awarding life or death, weal or woe unto us: and what sentence can we expect, what favour can we pretend to, if we presumptuously shall offend—oppose—that will, which is the supreme rule of justice, and sole fountain of mercy?

It is the will of our Redeemer, who hath bought us with an inestimable price, and with infinite pains hath rescued us from miserable captivity under most barbarous enemies, that obeying his will we might command our own, and serving him we might enjoy perfect freedom: and shall we, declining his call and conduct out of that unhappy state, bereave him of his purchase, frustrate his undertakings, and forfeit to ourselves the benefit of so great redemption?

It is the will of our best Friend; who loveth us much better than we do love ourselves; who is concerned for our welfare, as his own dearest in-

¹ 1 Sam. iii. 18.

terest, and greatly delighteth therein; who by innumerable experiments hath demonstrated an excess of kindness to us; who in all his dealings with us purely doth aim at our good, never charging any duty on us, or dispensing any event to us, so much with intent to exercise his power over us, as to express his goodness towards us; who never 'doth afflict or grieve us'¹ more against our will, than against his own desire; never indeed but when goodness itself calleth for it, and even mercy doth urge thereto; to whom we are much obliged, that he vouchsafeth to govern and guide us, our service being altogether unprofitable to him, his governance exceedingly beneficial to us. And doth not such a will deserve regard, may it not demand compliance from us? To neglect or infringe it, what is it? Is it not palpable folly, is it not foul disingenuity, is it not detestable ingratitude?

So doth every relation of God recommend his will to us; and each of his attributes doth no less: for,

It is the will of him who is most holy, or whose will is essential rectitude: how then can we thwart it, without being stained with the guilt, and wounded with a sense of great irregularity and iniquity?

It is the will of him who is perfectly just; who therefore cannot but assert his own righteous will, and avenge the violation thereof: is it then advisable to drive him to that point by wilful provocation; or to run upon the edge of necessary severity?

¹ Lam. iii. 39.

It is the will of him who is infinitely wise; who therefore doth infallibly know what is best for us, what doth most befit our capacities and circumstances; what in the final result will conduce to our greatest advantage and comfort: shall we then prefer the dreams of our vain mind before the oracles of his wisdom; shall we, forsaking the direction of his unerring will, follow the impulse of our giddy humour?

It is the will of him who is immensely good and benign; whose will therefore can be no other than good will to us; who can mean nothing thereby but to derive bounty and mercy on us. Can we then fail of doing well, if we put ourselves entirely into his hands; are we not our own greatest enemies, in withstanding his gracious intentions?

It is, finally, the will of him who is uncontrollably powerful; whose will therefore must prevail one way or other; either with our will, or against it, either so as to bow and satisfy us, or so as to break and plague us: for 'my counsel,' saith he, 'shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.'¹ As to his dispensations, we may fret, we may wail, we may bark at them, but we cannot alter or avoid them. Sooner may we by our moans check the tides, or by our cries stop the sun in his career, than divert the current of affairs, or change the state of things established by God's high decree: what he layeth on no hand can remove; what he hath destined, no power can reverse; our anger therefore will be ineffectual, our impatience will have no other fruit, than to aggravate our guilt, and augment our grief.

As to his commands, we may 'lift up ourselves

¹ Isa. xlv. 10.

against them,'¹ we may fight stoutly, we may in a sort prove conquerors; but it will be a miserable victory, the trophies whereof shall be erected in hell, and stand upon the ruins of our happiness; for while we insult over abused grace, we must fall under incensed justice. If God cannot fairly procure his will of us in way of due obedience, he will surely execute his will upon us in way of righteous vengeance; if we do not surrender our wills to the overtures of his goodness, we must submit our backs to the strokes of his anger: he must reign over us, if not as over loyal subjects to our comfort, yet as over stubborn rebels to our confusion; for this in that case will be our doom, and the last words God will deign to spend upon us—'Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.'²

'Now, the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.'³ Amen.

¹ Dan. v. 23.

² Luke, xix. 27.

³ Heb. xiii. 20.

SERMON X.

THE ATONEMENT A PLEDGE OF EVERY
OTHER BLESSING.

BY ANTHONY FARINDON, B. D.

[FARINDON was born in 1596, and died in 1638.]

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S E R M O N X.

ROMANS, VIII. 32.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?

GOD'S benefits come not alone, but one gift is the pledge of another. The grant of a mite is the assignment of a talent. A drop of dew from heaven is a prognostic of a gracious shower, of a flood, which nothing can dry but ingratitude. One of the Fathers might well say, that "the love of God is as a constant and endless circle, from good to good, in good, without error or inconstancy, rolling and carrying itself about in an everlasting gyration."¹ 'He spared not his own Son,' saith the text, 'but delivered him up for us all.' But how many gifts did usher in this? He gave him to us often in the creation of the world. For 'by him were all things made, and without him was nothing made that was made.'² When God giveth, he giveth his Son; for as we ask in his name, so he

¹ S. Dionys. de Divin. Nom. p. 200.

² John, i. 3.

giveth in his name whatsoever we ask. Every action of God is a gift, and every gift a tender of his Son—an art to make us capable of more. Thus the argument of God's love is drawn *a minori ad majus*, from that which seemeth little to that which is greater, from a grain to an harvest, from one blessing to a myriad, from our creation to our redemption, from Christ's actions to his passion; which is the true authentic instrument of his love. With us the argument holdeth not, but with God it doth: by giving little he giveth hopes of more. He that is our steward, to provide for us, and supply us out of his treasury—who ripeneth the fruits on the trees, and the corn in the fields, who draweth us wine out of the vine, and spinneth us garments out of the bowels of the worm, and fleece of the flock, will give us greater things than these. He that giveth us balm for our bodies, will give us physic for our souls. He that gave us our being by his Son, will deliver up his Son for the world. Here his love is in its zenith and vertical point, and in a direct line casteth its rays of comfort on his lost creature. Here the argument is at the highest, and St. Paul draweth it down again, *a majori ad minus*, from the greater to the less; and the conclusion is full—full of comfort to all. He that giveth a talent will certainly give a mite: he that giveth 'his Son,' will also give salvation; and he that giveth salvation, will give 'all things' which may work it out. 'He that delivered his Son,' is followed by the question, 'how shall he not?—how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' It is impossible it should be otherwise. Christ cometh not naked, but clothed with blessings; he cometh not empty, but with the riches of

heaven, the treasures of wisdom and happiness. Christ cometh not alone, but with troops of angels, with glorious promises and blessings. Nay, to make good the *quomodo non*, the 'How shall he not?'—to make it unanswerable, unquestionable—it is his nakedness that clothes us, his poverty that enricheth us, his diminution that maketh us great, and his exinanition and emptying of himself that filleth us; and his being 'delivered for us,' delivereth to us the possession of 'all things.'

Here then is an assignment made to mankind: 1, Christ given; 2, Given for us all; and, 3, A full stream of blessings issuing out with his blood.

Or, because it is a work of infinite love, we will call it *scalam amoris*, the scale or ladder of the divine love. And then the steps, the parts to come under consideration, will be, 1, The person delivered—'his own Son.' 2, The delivery and manner of it—'He delivered,' and 'spared him not.' 3, The persons for whom—'for us all:' and these will, in the last place, bring in, 4, The end of all, the end of Christ's delivery and of all his sufferings, and make us bold to ask this question, 'How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?'

I. 'His own Son.' This, though we make it the first step, yet indeed is the top of the ladder, the highest pitch of God's love, from which the light of his countenance shineth upon us, and showeth that he loved us as his own Son—nay, more than his own Son. In this manifestation of his love, he appeareth rather a Father to us than to him. To gain us, he is willing in a manner to be himself at a loss; and to endanger his own, that he may free us from slavery. He will spoil and rob himself, to enrich us; and, to make us his children, 'deliver up his own Son.' A strange contemplation it is:

Nazianzen shutteth it up in admiration, and counselleth us to sit down and “reverence it with silence.”¹ Can God delight to make his Son a sacrifice, who would not suffer Abraham to offer up his? Or might he not have taken an angel for his Son, as he did a ram for Isaac? *Τίς ὁ λόγος;* what reason can be given for this delivery? Here the object is so radiant that it confoundeth the sense, and we scarce can see it when we look upon it. God’s love is at such an height, that our contemplation cannot reach it; and though in plain terms we are told what was done, yet we are slow of heart to believe it. *Olim morbo nunc remedio laboramus*—the remedy is so admirable that it amazeth the patient. But why should we fear where no fear is? Why should we fear to disparage Christ, when he is so well pleased to humble himself? Why should we be wiser than God? Why should we offend and scandalize Christ, as Peter did: ‘Be this far from the Lord,’² from the Son of God; that is, ‘Let God forbid that which he will have done.’ Why should we check his wisdom, or be troubled at his love? When God will ‘deliver up his Son,’ to talk of improbability, or incongruity, or impossibility, is to speak against God. If he will deliver him, his will be done. He that resteth in God’s will, doth best acknowledge his majesty. It was his will to ‘deliver’ him. And this cleareth all doubts, and beateth down every imagination that exalteth itself. If God will do any thing, we have but one word left us for answer, —‘Amen,’ let it be done. He hath wisdom and power to attend his will; and ‘who are we that

¹ *Τοιαῦτα σιγῇ σεβέσθω.* Orat. 38.

² Matt. xvi. 22.

darken counsel by words without knowledge?"¹ When we fall down at his footstool, and acknowledge his infinite power; when we say, 'he only can do wondrous works;'² when in all humility we acknowledge that he can do more than we can think,—that he can uphold us when we are ready to fall, enrich us in poverty, strengthen us in weakness, supply us with all necessary means and encouragements in this our race; when we preach on the house-tops, that he can tread down all our enemies under our feet, and bind Satan in chains; when we believe and rely on it, that he is able to immortalize our flesh, to raise us out of the dust, and set us in heavenly places;—we think we have raised our *magnificats* to the highest: and indeed, a Christian needeth not set his songs and hallelujahs to a higher note. But yet we do not here rise so high, nor so fully express him, as when we give him an absolute will, and say, 'He doth what he will in heaven and in earth.'³ This can belong to none but the highest, to the King of kings and Lord of lords. This maketh God paramount, and commander of all. Even his omnipotency seemeth to submit and vail to his will, and to be commanded by it: for many things he doth not do, because he will not, not because he cannot. "He can do what he will," saith Tertullian; "and what he will not do, we may say he cannot. What he would do, he could and did."⁴ What, his Son? His 'own Son?'—his beloved Son, infinite and omnipotent as himself—shall he be 'delivered?'

¹ Job. xxxviii. 2.² Psalm lxxii. 18; lxxxvi. 10.³ Psalm cxxxv. 6.⁴ Dei posse, velle est; et non posse, nolle. Quod voluit, et potuit, et ostendit.

Yes, 'he delivered him,' because he would. His will is that which openeth the windows of heaven, and shutteth them again; that bindeth and looseth; that planteth and rooteth up; that made the world, and will destroy it. His will it was that humbled his Son; and his will it was that glorified him. He might not have done it, might not have delivered him. He might, without the least impairing of his justice, have kept him still in his bosom, and never showed him to the world: but as 'of his own will he begat us of the word of truth,' so 'he delivered up his Son,' βαλθεις, 'because he would.' For as in the creation God might have made man, as he made the other creatures, by his word alone; yet would not, but wrought him out of the earth, and, like a potter, formed and shaped him out of the clay with his own hands; so in the great work of our redemption, he did not send a Moses, or an angel, but 'delivered up his own Son,' and so gave a price infinitely above that which he bought; mortal and sinful men being of no value at all, but that he made them. He paid down, not a talent for a talent, but a talent for a mite, for nothing: for that which had made itself worse than nothing: he delivered up his Son for those who stood guilty of rebellion against him; and thus loved the world which was at enmity with him. Thus was he pleased to buy his own will, and to pay dear for his affection to us. And by this his incomprehensible love he did bound, as it were, his almighty power, his infinite wisdom, and his unlimited will: for here his power, wisdom, and will may seem to have found a limit: he cannot do, he cannot find out, he cannot wish for us, more than what he hath done in this delivery of his Son. How should this affect and ravish our souls! How should this flame

of God's love kindle love in us ! That benefit is great which preventeth our prayers ; that is greater, which is above our hope ; that is yet greater, that exceedeth our desires : but how great is that, which overrunneth our opinion, yea, swalloweth it up ! Certainly had not God revealed his will, we could not have desired it ; but our prayers would have been blasphemy—our hope, madness—our wish, sacrilege—and our opinion, impiety !

And now, if any ask, what moved his will ? Surely, no loveliness or attractiveness in the object. In it there was nothing to be seen but loathsomeness and deformity, and such enmity as might sooner move him to wrath than compassion, and make him rather send down fire and brimstone than his Son. That which moved him was himself—his own bowels of mercy and compassion. He loved us 'in our blood ;'¹ and, loving us, he bid us 'live ;' and, that we might live, 'delivered up his Son' to death. His mercy was the only orator to move his will : being merciful, he was also willing to help us. Mercy is all our plea, and it was all his motive, and wrought in him a will, a cheerful will : *Karakavxārai*, saith St. James, mercy 'rejoiceth against judgment.'² Though we had forgot our duty, yet would not he forget his mercy, but hearkened to it, and would not shut up his tender mercies in anger ;³ which is a metaphor taken from martial affairs. The Septuagint renders it *συνέχειν*, to make a trench about, and besiege it. Now, the goodness of God, and his love to his creature, would not suffer him thus to shut up his tender mercies, as a fort or town is shut up, to be undermined, and beat up and overcome ; but, as the be-

¹ Ezek. xvi. 6.² Jam. ii. 13.³ Psalm lxxvii. 9.

sieged many time make sallies upon the enemy, so the love and mercy of our God brake forth, even through his anger, and gained a conquest against the legions of his wrath. Let the world be impure, let men be sinners, let justice be importunate, let power be formidable, let vengeance be ready to fall; yet all must fall back, and yield to the love and mercy of God, which cannot be overcome, nor bound, nor shut up, but will break forth, and make way through all opposition, through sin, and all the powers of darkness, which besiege and compass it about; and will raise the siege, and drive off and chase away those enemies; and to conquer sin will deliver up his Son to the sinner. And this, saith Aquinas, was *ænigma amoris*, the riddle, or rather the mystery of love, to pose the wisdom of the world. I may say, being love, and infinite, it is no riddle at all, but plain and easy. For what can love do that is strange? What can it do amiss? That which moved God to do this, sheweth plainly that the end for which he did it was very good. 'He loved us,' is the best commentary on, 'he delivered his Son for us;' and taketh away all scruple and doubt. For, if we can once love our enemies, it is impossible but that our bowels should yearn towards them, and our will be bent and prone to raise them up even to that pitch and condition which our love hath designed; and, if our love were heavenly, as God's is, or but in some forward degree proportioned to his, we should find nothing difficult, account nothing absurd or misbecoming, which might promote or advantage their good: if our love have heat in it, our will will be forward and earnest, and we shall be ready even to lay down our lives for them. For love is like an

artificial glass, which when we look through, an enemy appeareth a friend; disgrace, honour; difficulties, nothing. When God saw us weltering in our blood, his love was ready to wash us; when we ran from him, his love ran after us to apprehend us; when we fought against him as enemies, his love was a prophet: 'Lo, all these may be my children.' What speak we of disgrace? God's love defendeth his majesty, and exalteth the humility of his Son. Love, as Plato saith, hath this privilege, that it cannot be defamed; and by a kind of law, hath this huge advantage, to make bondage, liberty; disgrace, honourable; infirmity, omnipotent. Who can stand up against love, and say, "Why didst thou this?" Had Marcion, Photinus, and Arius well weighed the force and privilege of love, they would not have denied Christ to be the Son of God, because God delivered him up for us, but would have seen as great glory in his humility as in his glory, and would have fallen down and worshipped God and man, even this crucified Lord of life, Jesus Christ. Love will do any thing for those whom she looketh and stayeth upon. If you 'ask a coat,' she 'giveth the cloak also;' if you 'desire her to go a mile, she will go with you twain;'¹ and is never weary, though she passes through places of horror and danger. If you be in the most loathsome dungeon, in the valley and shadow of death, she forsaketh you not, but will go along with you. Must the Son of God be delivered? Love sendeth him down. It was love that 'bowed the heavens' when he descended. Must he suffer? Love nailed him to the cross;

¹ Matt. v. 40.

and no power could do it but love. Must he be sacrificed? Love calleth it a 'baptism,' and is 'straitened,' till the sacrifice be slain.¹ Must he die? Must the Son of God die? Love calls it *τελείωσιν*, his 'perfection.'² So, though he be the Son of God, though we were his enemies, yet love reconcileth all these seeming contradictions, resolveth every doubt, tuneth these jarring strings, and out of this discord maketh that melody which delighteth both men and angels, and God himself; even that melody, whereof our love should be the resultance. He loved us; and then the conclusion follows sweetly and naturally, 'He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up.' And so from the person we pass to the delivery itself.

II. "He delivered, and spared him not." The economy and glorious dispensation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is here called *παράδοσις*, a 'delivery.' And delivered he was, first, into the virgin's womb. That was a strange descent; and even then, at his birth, began his passion. *Nasci se patitur*;³ he suffered himself to be fashioned in the womb: he took of man what was proper and natural to him, to be born, and die. Here he was drawn out and fitted, made an object for the malice of men and the rage of the devil to work on: here he was made a mark for his enemies to shoot at. Here he got a back for the whip, flesh to be ploughed, a face to be spit upon, a body to be nailed to the cross, and an heart to be pierced. Here he was built up as a temple, to be 'beat down with axes and hammers, with misery and affliction.' Yet God thus 'delivered him.' But further; being born,

¹ Luke, xii. 50.² Heb. ii. 10.³ Tertull. de Patient.

what was his whole life, but delivery from sorrow to sorrow, and from misery to misery, from poverty to shame, from derision to malice, from malice to death? This was the pomp and ceremony with which he was brought to his cross, and from thence to his grave. 'Deliver me not to the will of mine enemies,'¹ saith David. Behold, Christ's friends were his enemies. What creature was there to whom he was not delivered? Delivered he was to the angels—'to keep him,' you will say, 'in all his ways.'² But what need had he of an angel's assistance, whose wisdom reached over all? What needed he an angel's tongue to comfort him, who was Lord of the angels, and who with his voice could have destroyed the universe? What need had he, who could turn stones into bread, yea, work bread out of nothing, as he did in the multiplying of the loaves, to receive alms from the hand of his minister? He was delivered to Joseph and Mary, to whom he was subject and obedient.³ Delivered he was to an occupation and trade. He was delivered from Annas to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod to Pilate again, and from Pilate to the Jews, to do with him what they pleased. He was delivered to all the creatures: to heat and to cold; to the thorns, which gored him; to the whip, which made long furrows in his flesh; to the nails, which fastened him; to the spear, which pierced him; to the cross, which racked him; to the grave, which swallowed him. He was delivered to the devil himself, and to the power of darkness. There was

¹ Psalm xxvii. 12² Ibid. xci. 11.³ Luke i. 51.

no creature, from the highest to the lowest, to which he was not delivered. He was delivered in his body and in his soul ; in every part of his body, even in those which seemed free from pain. His tongue (which his enemies' cruelty affected not—for, though he was man, yet had he nothing of the impatience of man) complained of thirst : he said, 'I thirst.'¹ He was delivered up to a quick and lively sense of pain. Many times extremity of pain taketh pain away, and it is lost in itself ; but Christ's pain quickened his sense. The more sensible he was, the more he suffered, the more feeling he had. His last gasp was breathed out *φωνῇ μεγάλῃ*, 'with a strong voice.'² Delivered he was to envy, which 'delivered him ;'³ to treachery, which betrayed him ; to malice, which laid on sure strokes ; to pride, which scorned him ; to contempt, which spat upon him ; to all those furious passions which turn men into devils. Thus was our blessed Saviour delivered, not only to men, but to the passions of men, to the wild and brutish passions of his enemies, yea, to the rage of devils.

Further yet : he was delivered not only to their passions, but to his own also, which as man he carried about with him : 'Ἡ ψυχὴ μου τετάρακται, 'My soul is troubled,'⁴ said he. He was *ἐν ἀγωνίᾳ*, 'in an agony ;'⁵ which none can tell what it is, but he that hath felt it ; and none ever felt such an agony but he. 'Ἀδιημονεῖ, 'he was grievously vexed.'⁶ *Περίλυπός ἔστιν ἡ ψυχὴ*, 'his soul was exceeding sorrowful.'⁷ These several expressions the evangelists

¹ John, xix. 28.² Matt. xxvii. 50.³ Ibid. xxvii. 18.⁴ John, xii. 27.⁵ Luke, xxii. 44.⁶ Matt. xxvi. 37.⁷ Ib. v. 38.

give us—‘trouble,’ ‘vexation,’ ‘agony,’ ‘heaviness,’ and ‘sorrow,’ in his soul. These were the bitter ingredients which filled up his cup so full that he made it his prayer to have it taken out of his hand.¹ The consideration of which hath induced some to conceive that the sense of pain had so weakened his intellectual faculties that he forgot himself.² They, however, who thus interpret, seem not well to have advised with their reason, that would leave wisdom itself without the use of it. No question, it was the language of a bleeding heart, and the resultance of grief. For grieve Christ did, and fear. He who, as God, could have commanded a legion of angels, as man had need of one to comfort him. He was delivered up to passions, to afflict, not to swallow him up. There was no disorder, no jar with reason, which was still above them. There was no sullenness in his grief, no despair in his complaints, no unreasonableness in his thoughts; not a thought rose amiss, not a word was misplaced, not a motion irregular. He knew he was not forsaken, when he asked, ‘Why hast thou forsaken me?’³ The bitterness of the cup struck him into a fear. When his obedience called for it, he prayed indeed, ‘Let this cup pass from me.’⁴ But that was not the cup of his cross and passion, but the cup of his agony. And in that prayer it is plain he was heard; for the text tells us, ‘there appeared an angel unto him from heaven to strengthen him.’⁵ Being of the same mould and temper with men, he was willing to receive the impressions which are so visible in man, of sorrow and fear; even those affec-

¹ Mark, xiv. 36.² Calvin, Harm. in loc.³ Matt. xxvii. 46.⁴ Ib. xxvi. 49.⁵ Luke, xxii. 43.

tions which are seated in the sensitive part, and without which misery and pain have no tooth at all to bite us. Our passions are the sting of misery; nor could Christ have suffered at all if he had been free from them. If misery be a whip, it is our passion and fantasy that make it a scorpion. What could malice hurt me, if I did not help the blow? What edge hath an injury, if I could not be angry? What terror hath death, if I did not fear? It is opinion and passion that make us miserable: take away these, and misery is but a name. You touch not the stoic, though you bray him in a mortar.¹ Delivered then was the Son of God to these passions—to fear and to grief. These strained his body, racked his joints, stretched his sinews: these trickled down in clots of blood, and exhaled themselves through the pores of his flesh in a bloody sweat. The fire that melted him was his fear and his grief.

Is there yet any more? or can the Son of God be delivered further? Delivered he was—not to despair, for that was impossible, not to the torments of hell, which could never seize on his innocent soul; but to the wrath of God, which ‘withered his heart like grass,’ ‘burnt up his bones like a hearth,’ and ‘brought him even to the dust of death.’² Look now upon his countenance—it is pale and wan; upon his heart—it is melted like wax; upon his tongue—it cleaveth to the roof of his mouth. What talk we of death? The wrath of God is truly τῶν φοβερῶν φοβερώτατον, the terriblest thing in the world—the sting of sin, which is the sting of

¹ Tunde; Anaxarchum enim non tundis.

² Psalm cii. 3, 4; xxii. 15.

death. Look into our own souls. That weak apprehension of it, which we sometimes have, what a night and darkness doth it draw over us! Nay, what a hell doth it kindle in us! What torments do we feel—the types and sad representations of those in the bottomless pit! How do our delights distaste us, and our desires strangle themselves! What a Tophet is the world, and what furies are our thoughts! What do we see which we do not turn from? What do we know which we would not forget? What do we think which we do not startle at? Or, do we know what to think? Now, what rock can hide us? What mountain can cover us? We are weary of ourselves, and could wish rather not to be than to be under God's wrath. Were it not for this, there would be no law, no conscience, no devil; but with this, the law is a killing letter, the conscience a fury, and the devil a tormentor. But yet there is still a difference between our apprehension and Christ's. For, alas! to us, God's wrath doth not appear in its full horror; for, if it did, we should sooner die than offend him. Some do but think of it; few think of it as they should; and they that are most apprehensive, look upon it as at a distance, as that which may be turned away; and so, not fearing God's wrath, 'treasure up wrath against the day of wrath.' To us, when we take it at the nearest, and have the fullest sight of it, it appeareth but as the cloud did to Elijah's servant, 'like a man's hand;' but to Christ 'the heavens were black with clouds and winds,'¹ and it showered down upon him as in a tempest of fire and brimstone. We have not his eyes, and there-

¹ 1 Kings, xviii. 44.

fore not his apprehension : we see not so much deformity in sin as he did, and so not so much terror in the wrath of God. It were impiety and blasphemy to think that the blessed martyrs were more patient than Christ; *cujus natura patientia*, "whose very nature was patience:"¹ yet who of all that noble army ever breathed forth such disconsolate speeches? God indeed delivered them up to the saw, to the rack, to the wrath of lions, to all the engines of cruelty, and shapes of death; but did they ever cry out, "they were forsaken?" He snatched them not from the rage of the persecutor by a miracle; but, behold a greater miracle: "In all their torments they had more life and joy in their countenances than they who looked on, who were more troubled with the sight than the martyrs were with the punishment."² Their torture was their triumph; their afflictions were their melody. If weak they were made strong. "'Torments, racks, flames, and the last enemy, death itself, were but a recreation and refreshment to Christians,"³ who suffered all these with the patience of a stander-by. But what speak we of martyrs? Divers sinners (whose ambition never reached at such a crown, but rather trembled at it) have been delivered up to afflictions and crosses, nay to the anger of God; but never any, nay, not those who have despaired, were so delivered as Christ. We may

¹ Tertull. de Patientia.

² ——— Rident. superantque dolores,
Spectanti similes.—Sil. Ital. lib. 1.

³ Tormenta, carcer, ungulæ,
Stridensque flammis lamina,
Atque ipsa pœnarum ultima,
Mors, Christianis ludus est.

Prudent. Hymn. in laudem Vincentii Mar.

say that the traitor Judas felt not so much when he went and hanged himself. For though Christ could not despair, yet the wrath of God was more visible to him than to those that do, who bear but their own burdens, whereas he lay pressed under the sins of the whole world. God in his approaches of justice, when he cometh toward the sinner to correct him, may seem to go like the consul of Rome, with his rods and his axes carried before him. Many sinners have felt his rod : and his ' rod is comfort ; his frown favour ; his anger, love ; and his blow a benefit. But Christ was struck, as it were, with his axe. Others have trembled under his wrath, but Christ was ' even consumed by the stroke of his hand.'¹ Being delivered to God's wrath, that wrath delivereth him to these throes and agonies,—delivereth him to Judas ; who delivereth, nay, betrayeth him to the Jews ; who deliver him to Pilate ; who delivered him to the cross ; where the Saviour of the world must be murdered, where innocency and truth itself hangeth between two thieves. But his soul was crucified more than his body, and his heart had sharper nails to pierce it than his hands or feet. ' He delivered him, and spared him not.'

But, to rise one step more : ' He delivered, and' in a manner, ' forsook him ;' restrained his influence, denied relief, withdrew comfort, stood as it were afar off, and let him fight it out unto death. He ' looked, and there was none to help ;' even ' to the Lord he called, but he heard him not.'² *Ἀνεβόησε φωνῇ μεγάλῃ.* He ' roared out for the very grief of his heart,'³ and ' cried, with a loud

¹ Psalm xxxix. 10. ² Isaiah, lxiii. 5. ³ Psalm xviii. 41.

voice, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'¹ And could God forsake him? When he hung upon the cross, did he not see 'the joy that was set before him?'² Yes, he did; but not to comfort, but rather to torment him. 'By the counsel of the Godhead it was set down and determined that his glory should add to his punishment:'³ that his knowledge, which was more clear than a seraphim's, should increase his grief; his glory, his shame; his happiness, his misery; that there should not only be vinegar in his drink and gall in his honey, and myrrh with his spices; but that his drink should be vinegar, his honey, gall, and all his spices as bitter as myrrh; that his flowers should be thorns, and his triumph, shame. This could sin do; and can we love it? This could the love and the wrath of God do—his love to his creature and his wrath against sin. And what a delivery, what a desertion was this, which did not deprive Christ of strength, but enfeeble him with strength; which did not leave him in the dark, but punish him with light! What a strange delivery was that, which delivered him up without comfort, nay, which betrayed and delivered up his comforts themselves! What misery equal to that which maketh strength a tormentor, knowledge a vexation, and joy and glory a persecution? There now hangeth his sacred body on the cross, not so much afflicted with his passion, as his soul was wounded with compassion; with compassion on his mother; with compassion on his disciples; with compassion on the Jews, who pierced him, for whom he prayeth when

¹ Matt. xxvii. 46.

² Heb. xii. 2.

³ Altissimo Divinitatis consilio actum est, ut gloria militare in pœnam.—Leo.

they mock him ; which did manifest his divinity as much as his miracles ;—with compassion on the temple, which was shortly to be levelled with the ground ;—with compassion on all mankind ; bearing the burden of all, dropping his pity and his blood together upon them ; feeling in himself the torments of the blessed martyrs, the reproach of his saints, the wounds of every broken heart, the poverty, diseases, and affliction of all his brethren to the end of the world ; delivered to a sense of their sins who feel them not, and to a sense of theirs who groan under them ; delivered up to all the miseries and sorrows, not only which himself then felt, but which any man, which all men have felt or shall feel to the time the trump shall sound, and he shall come again in glory. The last delivery was of his soul, which was indeed a *traditio*, a yielding it up, a voluntary emission, or delivering it up into his Father's hands. He preventeth the spear and the hand of the executioner, and giveth up the ghost. What shall I say ? or where shall I end ? Who can fathom this depth ? The angels stand amazed ; the heavens are hung with black ; the earth openeth her mouth, and the grave her's, and yieldeth up her dead ; the veil of the temple rendeth asunder ; the earth trembleth, and the rocks are cleft. But neither art nor nature can reach the depth of this wisdom and love : no tongue, neither of the living nor of the dead, neither of men nor angels, is able to express it. The most powerful eloquence is the threnody of a broken heart ; for there Christ's death speaketh itself, and the virtue and power of it reflecteth back again upon him, and reacheth him at the right

hand of God, where his wounds are open, his merits vocal, interceding for us to the end of the world.

We have now past two steps and degrees in this scale of love, with wonder and astonishment, and, I hope, with grief and love: we have passed through a field of blood to the top of Mount Calvary, where the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, is nailed to the cross, and, being lifted up upon his cross, looketh down upon us, to draw us after him. Look then back upon him who looketh upon us, whom our sins have pierced, and behold his blood trickling down upon us; which is one ascent more, and bringeth in the persons for whom he was delivered:—First, ‘for us;’ secondly, ‘for us all.’

III. Now that he should be delivered ‘for us,’ is a contemplation full of delight and comfort, but not so easy to digest. For if we reflect upon ourselves, and there see nothing but confusion and horror, we shall soon ask the question, Why ‘for us?’ Why not for the lapsed angels, who fell from their estate as we did? they, glorious spirits; we, vile bodies; they, heavenly spirits; we, of the earth, earthly, ready to sink to the earth, from whence we came; they, immortal spirits; we, as the grass, withered before we grew. Yet he ‘spared not his Son’ to spare us; but the angels that fell ‘he cast into hell,’ and ‘chained them up in everlasting darkness.’¹ With the angels God dealeth in rigour, and relenteth not; with us, in favour and mercy. He seeketh after us, and layeth hold on us, being gone from him as far as sin

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 4.

and disobedience could carry us out of his reach. It was his love, his will, to do so: and in this we might rest. But divines will tell us that man was a fitter subject of mercy than the angels, because the angels' sin was more spontaneous, wrought in them by themselves: man had, *importunam arborem*, that flattering and importuning tree, and that subtle and seducing serpent, to urge and sway him from his obedience: man had a tempter; the angels were both the temptation and tempters to themselves: man took in death by looking abroad; but the angels, reflecting upon themselves, gazed so long upon their own beauty, till they saw it changed into horror and deformity; and the offence is more pardonable, when the motive is from without, than where it groweth up of itself. Besides, the angels did not all fall; but the whole lump of mankind was leavened with the same leaven; and pity it may seem, that so noble a creature, made after God's own image, should be utterly lost. These reasons, with others, we may admit; though they may seem rather to be conjectures than reasons, and we have no such light in Scripture to give them a fairer appearance. But the Scripture is plain, that he 'took not the angels;' ¹ he did not lay his hands upon them, to redeem them to liberty, and strike off their bonds. And we must go out of the world to find the reason, and seek the true cause in the bosom of the Father, nay in the bowels of his Son, and there see the cause why he was delivered for us, written in his heart. It was 'the love of God to mankind.'² And what was in mankind but enmity and hos-

¹ Heb. ii. 16.² Tit. iii. 4.

tility, sin and deformity? which are no proper motives to draw on love. And yet God loved us, and hated sin, and made haste to deliver us from it. *Dilexisti me, Domine, plusquam te, quando mori voluisti pro me*, saith Augustine: "Lord, when thou diedst for me, thou madest it manifest that my soul was dearer to thee than thyself." Such a high esteem did he set upon a soul, which we scarce honour with a thought, but so live as if we had none. For us men then, and for us sinners, was Christ delivered. The prophet Isaiah speaketh it; and he could not speak it properly of any but him: 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.'¹ So that he was delivered up, not only to the cross and shame, but to our sins, which nailed him to the cross; which not only crucified him in his humility, but crucify him still in his glory, now he sitteth at the right hand of God; and 'put him to shame,' to the end of the world. Why complain we of the Jews' malice? or Judas's treachery? or Pilate's injustice? We, we alone, are they who crucified the Lord of life. Our treachery was the Judas which betrayed him; our malice the Jew which accused him; our perjury the false witness against him; our injustice the Pilate that condemned him. Our pride scorned him; our envy grinned at him; our luxury spat upon him; our covetousness sold him. Our corrupt blood was drawn out of his wounds, our swellings pricked with his thorns, our sores lanced with his spear, and the whole 'body of sin' stretched out and crucified with the Lord of life. He 'delivered him

¹ Isaiah, liii. 5.

up for us sinners.' No sin there is which his blood will not wash away, but final impenitency, which is not so much a sin as the sealing up of the body of sin, when the measure is full. For us sinners—for the progeny of an arch-traitor, and as great traitors as he. Take us at our worst; if we repent, he was 'delivered for us.' And if we do not repent, yet he may be said to be 'delivered for us;' for he was delivered for us to that end, that we might repent. For us sinners he was delivered; for us, 'when we were without strength;' for us, when we were 'ungodly.'¹ So we were considered in this great work of redemption. And thus high are we gone in this scale and ladder of love.

There is one step more. He was delivered 'for us all;'—*all*, not considered as elect or reprobate, but as men, as sinners; for that name will take in all; for 'all have sinned.'² And here we are taught to make a stand, and not to touch too hastily. 'For all.' This some will not touch; and yet they do touch and press it with that violence that they press it almost into nothing; make 'the world' not 'the world,' and 'whosoever' not 'whosoever,' but some certain men; and turn 'all' into 'a few;' deduct whom they please out of 'all people, nations, and languages,' and out of Christendom itself; leave some few with Christ upon the cross, whose persons he beareth, whom they call the elect—and mean themselves. 'So God loved the world;'³ that is the elect, say they: they are the world—where it is hard to find them; for they are called out of it. If the elect be 'the world'

¹ Rom. v. 6, 8.² Rom. v. 12.³ John, iii. 16.

which God so loved, then they are such elect as may not believe, such elect as may perish, and whom God will have perish if they do not believe. It is true, none have benefit of Christ's death but the elect; but from hence it doth not follow that no other might have had. Theirs is the kingdom: but are not they shut out now, who might have made it theirs? 'God,' saith St. Peter, 'would not that any should perish;'¹ and, 'God is the Saviour of all men,' saith St. Paul, 'but especially of them that believe;'² all, if they believe and repent; and those who are obedient to the gospel, because they do. The blood of Christ is poured forth on the believer; and with it he sprinkleth his heart, and is saved; the wicked trample it under their feet and perish. The blood of Christ is sufficient to wash away the sins of the world, nay of a thousand worlds. Christ paid down a ransom of so infinite a value that it might redeem all that are, or possibly might be, under captivity. But none are actually redeemed but they who make him their captain, and do as he commandeth; that is, believe and repent. In this all agree—in this they are brethren; and why should they fall out, when both uphold the privilege of the believer, and leave the rod of the stubborn impenitent to fall upon him? "The death of Christ is not applied to all," say some: "It is not for all," say others. "The virtue of Christ's meritorious passion is not made use of by all," say some; "It was never intended that it should," say others. And the event is the same: for if it be not made use of and applied, it is as if it were not; as if it had never been obtained:

¹ 2 Pet. iii 9.² 1 Tim. iv. 10.

only the unbeliever is left under the greater condemnation, who turned away from Christ, who spake unto him, not only from heaven, but from his cross, and refused that grace which was offered him; which could not befall him if there had never been any such overture made. For how can one refuse that which never concerned him? how can he forfeit that pardon which was never sealed? how can he despise the spirit of grace which never breathed towards him? They who are so tender and jealous of Christ's blood, that no drop must fall but where they direct it, do but undermine and shake one truth with another;¹ set up the particular love of God to believers, to overthrow his general love to mankind; confound the virtue of Christ's passion with its effect, and draw them together within the same narrow compass; bring it under a decree, that it can save no more than it doth, because it hath its bounds set;—'hitherto it shall go, and no further;' and was ordained to quicken some, but to withdraw itself from others, as shut out and hid from the light and force of it, from having any title to it, long before even they saw the sun. Thus they shorten the hand of God, when it is stretched out to all; bound his love, which is proffered to all; stint the blood of Christ, which gusheth out upon all; and circumscribe his mercy, which is large enough to cover all. And the reason is no better than the position: To make salvation more precious and estimable, it must be rare.² Then it is most glorious, when it is a peculiar, and entailed on a few. Why should the love

¹ Veritatem veritate concutere.

² Quod vis esse charum, effice ut sit rarum.

of God be a common thing? I answer, why should it not be common, since he is pleased to have it so? Why should we cast away so many, to endear a few? Can there be any glory in that privilege which is writ with the blood of so many millions? Why should not God's love be common, since he would have it not only common, but communicated to all, and expresseth himself as one grieved, and troubled, and angry, because it is not so? Why should we fear God's love should be cast away by being proffered to many? His love of friendship and complacency, to those whom he calleth his friends, cannot be lost, but is as eternal as himself: it assisteth and upholdeth them, and will crown them everlastingly. Nor is his general love of good will and affection lost, though it be lost: for it is even with him, even when the wicked are in hell. Christ's blood is ever in the flow, though there be but few that take the tide, and are carried along with it. God's goodness is larger than his beneficence.¹ He doth not do what good he can; or rather, he doth not do what good he would; because we fall back, and will not receive it. We will not suffer him to be good; we will not suffer him to be merciful; we will not suffer him to save us. 'This is the condemnation of the world, that light came into the world, and men loved darkness more than light.'² The philosopher will tell us, that the Indians live at the very rising of the sun, yet their bodies are black and swarthy, and resemble the night.³ So, many there be who live

¹ Plus est bonitas Dei quam beneficentia.

² John, iii. 19.

³ Ad nascentem solem siti sunt, tamen in corpore color noctis est.—Apul. Flor. i.

in the very region of light, where the beams fall upon them warm and pure, and are darted at their very eyes, and yet they remain the children of darkness. "Christ was delivered for all, is a true proposition: it is infidelity alone that can make it heretical."¹ And yet it is true still, though to him that believeth not it is of no more use than if it were false. He was delivered for thee; but thou wilt not receive him. His passion is absolute; but thou art impenitent. He died for Judas, who betrayed him; but will not save Judas, that despaired and hanged himself. Infidelity and impenitency are the worst restrictives, that limit and draw down to particulars a proposition so profitably general; and bound so saving a universal; that contract and sink all into a few.

To conclude this. Christ hanging on the cross looketh upon all; but all do not cast an eye, and look up in faith upon him. He was delivered to deliver all; but all will not be delivered. Our whole nature is united in Christ's person; not the persons of a few, but our whole nature: and our whole nature is of compass large enough to take in all.² And in that common nature of man he offered up himself on the cross for the sin of all, that he might 'take away the sin of the world'³—destroy the very species and being of it. Which though it be not done, cannot be imputed to any scantiness or deficiency of virtue in his blood, which is of power to purge out sin wherever it is, if the heart that fostereth sin be ready and willing

¹ Facit infidelitas multorum ut Christus non pro omnibus moriatur, qui pro omnibus mortuus est.—S. Ambros.

² Omnis natura nostra in Christi hypostasi.

³ John, i. 29.

to receive and apply it. And in this common nature of man (not from Abraham or David only, as St. Matthew, but even from the first man Adam himself, as St. Luke carrieth up his genealogy) did Christ offer up himself upon the cross. And in this common nature he presented himself before his Father. And now God looketh upon Christ and mankind as our eye doth upon light, and colours, which cannot be seen without light. Before this 'light came into the world,' we were covered over with darkness and deformity, and God could not look upon us but in anger; but through this common light we may be seen and be beloved, we may be seen with pleasure. For as God is delighted in his Son, so in him he is 'well pleased' in those 'sons which he shall bring with him to glory.'¹ But if we will fully withdraw ourselves from this light, then doth 'his soul hate us.'² Christ is 'the brightness of his glory'³—light enough for God to look through upon a thousand worlds multiplied a thousand times. And if we do not hide ourselves from it, hide ourselves in the caverns of the earth—in the world; if we do not drown ourselves in the bottom of the sea—in the deluge of our lusts; if we do not bury ourselves alive in stubborn impenitency; if we do not stop up all the passages of our souls; if we do not still 'love darkness,' and 'make it a pavilion round about us;'⁴ he will look upon us through this light, and look lovingly upon us with favour and affection. He will look upon us as his purchase; and he that 'delivered his Son for us will

¹ Heb. ii. 10.³ Heb. i. 3.² Psalm xi. 5.⁴ Psalm xviii. 2.

with him also freely give us all things :—which is the end of all, the end of Christ's being delivered, and offereth itself to our consideration in the last place.

IV. God 'delivered,' God 'sent,' God 'gave' his Son. All these expressions we find to make him a gift. He is 'the desire,' and he is the riches 'of all nations.'¹ As whatsoever we do we must do; so whatsoever we have, we receive in his name. 'The name of Jesus,' said St. Peter, of the impotent man, 'hath made this man strong.'² By his name we are justified; by his name we are sanctified; by his name we shall enter into glory. With him we have all things; for 'in him are all the treasures of riches and wisdom.'³ We may think of all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them; but these come not within the compass, nor are they to be reckoned amongst his donations. For, as the naturalists observe of the glory of the rainbow, that it is wrought in our eye, and not in the cloud, and that there is no such pleasing variety of colours there as we see; so the pomp and riches and glory of this world are of themselves nothing, but are the works of our opinion, and the creations of our fancy, and have no worth or price but what our lusts and desires set upon them. It is our luxury which hath raised the market, and made them valuable and in esteem, which of themselves have nothing to recommend them and set them off.⁴ My covetousness maketh that which is but earth a god; my ambition maketh that which is but air an heaven; and my wantonness walketh

¹ Hag. ii. 7.² Acts, iii. 16.³ Col. ii. 3⁴ *Luxuria his pretium fecit.*

in the midst of pleasures as in a paradise. There is no such things as riches and poverty, honour and meanness, trouble and pleasure; but we have made them, and we make the distinction. There are no such plants grow up in this world of themselves; but we set them and water them, and they spread themselves, and cast a 'shadow,' and we walk in this shadow, and delight or 'disquiet ourselves in vain.'¹ How many heroic persons lie in chains, whilst folly and baseness walk at large? And no doubt there have been many who have looked through the paint of the pleasures of this life, and beheld them as monsters; and then made it their pleasure and triumph to condemn them. And yet we will not quite exclude and shut out riches and the things of this world from the sum: for with Christ they are something; and they are then most valuable when for his sake we can fling them away. It is he alone that can make riches a gift, and poverty a gift; honour a gift, and dishonour a gift; pleasure a gift, and trouble a gift; life a gift, and death a gift. By this power they are reconciled and drawn together, and are but one and the same thing. If we look up into heaven, there we shall see them in a near conjunction, even the poor lazar 'in the rich man's bosom.'² In the night there is no difference to the eye between a pearl and a pebble, between the choicest beauty and most abhorred deformity. In the night the deceitfulness of riches and the glory of affliction lie hid and are not seen, or appear in a contrary shape;—in the false shape of terror, where it is not; or of glory, where it is not to be found. But when the

¹ Psalm xxxix. 6.² Luke, xvi. 23.

light of Christ's countenance shineth upon them, then they are seen as they are; and we behold so much deceitfulness in the one that we dare not trust them, and so much hope and advantage in the other, that we begin to rejoice in them, and so make them both conducive to that end for which he was delivered, and our convoys to happiness.

'All things' is of a large compass, large enough to take in the whole world. But then it is the world transformed and altered, the world conquered by faith, the world in subjection to Christ. 'All things are ours,' when 'we are Christ's.'¹ There is a civil dominion and right to these things; and this we have by right of creation, for 'the earth is the Lord's,' and he hath given it to the sons of men. And there is an evangelical dominion; not the power of having them, but the power of using them to God's glory; that they may be a gift: and this we have by right of adoption, as the sons of God, begotten in Christ. Christ came not into the world to purchase it for us, or instate us in it. He did not suffer, that we might be wanton; nor was poor, that we might be rich; nor was brought to the dust of death, that we might be set in high places. Such a Messiah did the Jews look for; and such a Messiah do some Christians, worse than the Jews, frame to themselves; and in his name they 'beat their fellow-servants,'² and strip them, deceive and defraud them, because they fancy themselves to be his, 'in whom there was found no guile.' They are in the world as the mad Athenian was on the

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

² Matt. xxiv. 49.

shore ; every ship, every house, every lordship is theirs. And indeed, they have as fair a title to their brother's estate as they have to the kingdom of heaven ; for they have nothing to show for either. St. Paul calleth the devil the god of this world ; and these in effect make him the saviour of the world ; for, as if he had been lifted up and nailed to the cross for them, to him every knee doth bow, nor will they receive the true Messiah but in this shape. They conceive him giving gifts unto men ; not spiritual, but temporal ; not the graces of the Spirit, humility, meekness, and contentedness ; but silver and gold : dividing inheritances, removing of land-marks, giving to Ziba Mephibosheth's land ; making not saints, but kings upon the earth. Thus they of the church of Rome have set it down for a positive truth, that all civil dominion is founded in grace, that is, in Christ ; a doctrine which bringeth with it a pick-lock and a sword, and giveth men power to spoil whom they please, to take from them that which is theirs either by fraud or by violence, and to do both in the name and power of Christ. But let no man make his charter larger than it is. In the gospel we find none of such an extent as may reach to every man, to every corner of the earth ; as may measure out the world, and put into our hands any part of it that either our wit or our power can take in. Christ never drew any such conveyance ; the gospel brought no such tidings. But when honest labour and industry have brought riches in, Christ setteth a seal, imprinteth a blessing on them, sanctifieth them unto us by the word and prayer ; and so maketh them ours, our servants to

minister unto us, and our friends to promote us unto 'everlasting habitations.'¹

Our charter is large enough, and we need not interline it with those glosses which the flesh and the love of the world will soon suggest. With Christ we have 'all things' which work to that end for which he was delivered. We have his commands, which are the pledges of his love: for he gave us them that he might give us more, that he might give us a crown. We have his promises of immortality and eternal life. *Faciet hoc: nam qui promisit est potens*: 'he shall do it, for he is able to perform it.' With him every word shall stand. He hath given us faith (that is the gift of God) to apprehend and receive the promises; and hope, to lift us up unto them. He hath given us his pastors to teach us (that is scarce looked upon as a gift: but then) he hath given us his angels to minister unto us, He hath given us his Spirit, and filled us with his grace, if we will receive it; which will make his commands, which are now grievous, easy; his promises, which are rich, profitable: which may carry us on in a regular and peaceable course of piety and obedience; which is our angel, which is our God; and we call it grace. All these things we have with Christ. And the apostle doth not only tell us that God doth give us them; but, to put it out of doubt, challengeth, as it were, the whole world to show how it should be otherwise: 'how will he not with him also freely give us all things?' This question addeth energy and weight, and emphasis, and maketh the position more positive, the affirmation

¹ Luke, xxv. 9.

more strong, and the truth of it more persuasive and convincing. 'Shall he not give us all things?' It is impossible but he should. It is more possible for 'a city upon a hill to be hid,'¹ than for him to hide his favour from us; more possible for heaven to sink into hell, or for hell to raise itself up to God's mercy-seat, than for him to withhold any thing from them to whom he hath given his Son. Impossible it is, ὡς οὐκ ἔνλογον; as "most inconvenient," as that which is against his wisdom and his justice and his goodness, and ὡς ἀβέλητον, as "abhorrent to his will," to deny us any thing. In brief, if the 'earth' be not 'as iron,' 'the heavens' cannot 'be as brass.'² God cannot but give when we are fit to receive; and in Christ we are made capable. When he descendeth, mercy descendeth with him in full shower of blessings, to make our souls as the paradise of God, to quicken our faith, to rouse up our hope. And in this light, in this assurance, in this heaven, we are bold, with St. Paul, to put up the question against all doubts, all fears, all temptations that may assault us: 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?'

And now we have passed up every step and degree of this scale and ladder of love, and seen Christ delivered and nailed to the cross. And from thence he looked down, and speaketh to us to the end of the world. "The cross on which he suffered was the chair of his profession."³ And from this chair we are taught humility, constant patience,

¹ Matt. v. 14.

² Deut. xxviii. 23.

³ Crux patientis fuit cathedra docentis.

perfect obedience, an exact art and method of living well, drawn out in several lines. What was ambitiously said of Homer, that if all sciences were lost, they might be found in him, may most truly be said of Christ's cross and passion: that if all the characters of innocency, humility, obedience, love, had been lost, they might here be found *in libro vitæ Agni*, in the book of the life—nay, of the death—of 'the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world;'¹ yet now nailed to the cross.

Let us then, with love and reverence, look upon him who thus looked upon us. Let us put on our crucified Jesus, that is, as Chrysostom, "every virtue"—his humility, his patience, his obedience; and so 'bear about with us the dying of our Lord,'² and draw the picture of a crucified Saviour in ourselves. To this end was he delivered up for us, to this end we must receive him, that we may glorify God, as he hath glorified him on earth. For God's glory and our salvation are twisted together and wrought as it were in the same thread, and linked together in the same bond of peace. 'I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me;'³ thus it runneth; and it runneth on evenly in a stream of love.

Oh! how must it needs delight him to see his gift prosper in our hands; to see us delivering up ourselves to him who was thus 'delivered for us;' to see his purchase, those who were bought with this price, made his 'peculiar people.' 'Lift' then 'up the gates' of your souls, 'that this King of

¹ Rev. xiii. 8.

² 2 Cor. iv. 10.

³ Psalm l. 15.

glory may come in.'¹ If you seek salvation, you must seek the glory of God; and if you seek the glory of God, you shall find it in your salvation. Thou mayest cry, lo! "Here it is," or, "There it is;"—but here it is found. The few may seek salvation in the law; the superstitious, in ceremony and bodily exercise; the zealot in the fire and the whirlwind; the fantastic lazy Christian, in a thought, in a dream; and the profane libertine in hell itself: but then, then alone we find it, when we meet it in conjunction with the glory of God, which shineth most gloriously in a crucified Christ, and in an obedient Christian made conformable to him, and so 'bearing about in him the marks of the Lord Jesus.'²

To conclude then: since God 'hath delivered up his own Son for us all,' and 'with him given us all things,' let us open our hearts and receive him; that is, believe in his name; that is, be faithful to him; that is, love him, and keep his commandments, which is our conformity to his death. And then he will give us—what will he give us? He will heap gift upon gift, give us 'power to become the sons of God.'³ Let us receive Christ in his shame, in his sorrow, in his agony,—take him hanging on the cross; take him, and take a pattern by him: that, as he was, so we may be troubled for our sins; that we may mingle our tears with his blood; drag sin to the bar; accuse; and condemn it; revile and spit in its face, at the fairest presentment it can

¹ Psalm xxiv. 7, 9.

² Gal. vi. 17.

³ John, i. 12.

make; and then nail it to the cross, that it may languish and faint by degrees, till it give up the ghost, and die in us. Then lie we down in peace in the grave, and expect a glorious resurrection; when we shall receive Christ, not in humility, but in majesty, and with him all his riches and abundance, all his promises, even glory, and immortality, and eternal life.

SERMON XI.
ON THE CRUCIFIXION.
BY DR. SOUTH.

[Robert South was born in 1631, and died in 1716.]

MEMORANDUM

TO : [illegible]

FROM : [illegible]

SUBJECT: [illegible]

[illegible text block containing several lines of text]

[illegible text block containing several lines of text]

S E R M O N X I.

ISAIAH, LIII. 8.

— *For the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

THIS great and eloquent prophet, the evangelist of the Jewish church, (as without any impropriety he may be called,) from the 13th verse of the foregoing chapter to the end of this, seems wrapped up with the contemplation of a great person under strange and unusual afflictions; whose character, with all the heights of rhetoric which the genius of grief and prophecy together could raise him to, he here sets himself with full purpose to describe. In all which description there is no one passage, which does not speak something extraordinary and supernatural of the person described, and withal represent the describer of it in the highest degree of ecstasy and rapture; so that nothing could transcend the height of the expression, but the sublimity of its subject. For still it fastens upon him the marks and tokens of something more than a man, indeed more than a creature; ascribing actions to him, which surmount any created power; and so

visibly, upon all principles of reason, above the strength and reach of the strongest arm of flesh, that if the person here spoken of be but a man, I am sure it requires the wit of more than a man to make sense of the prophecy. Who that great person therefore was, here so magnificently set forth by the prophet, is the thing now to be inquired into. In which inquiry we shall find several opinions, and every one of them pretending to give the right interpretation of the place. I shall reduce them all to these two :

First, the opinion of the ancient ;

Secondly, the opinion of some later, interpreters.

1. As for the ancient interpreters I may boldly and truly say, that it was the general sense of all the old Jewish rabbies, that the person intended in this prophecy was the Messias. Take the affirmation of rabbi Alschech, in his comment upon this prophecy : “ Our rabbies of blessed memory unanimously agree with the received tradition, that the Messias is here spoken of.”¹ And though their opinion of the temporal greatness of their Messias might (if any thing) tempt them to draw this prophecy another way, (since it declares the low, abject, and oppressed condition of the person here treated of,) yet to show that a suffering Messias was no such paradox in the divinity of the ancient Jewish rabbies, it was a constant received speech among them, that dividing all the afflictions of the people of God into three parts, one third was to fall upon the Messias.

2. And as for the doctors and fathers of the Christian church, they do all with one unanimous breath

¹ Rabbini nostri beatæ memoriæ uno ore statuunt juxta receptam traditionem hic de rege Messîâ sermonem esse.

declare this to be a prophecy of the Messias, and this Messias to be Jesus Christ. And so full are they to this purpose, that Esaias, upon the account of this prophecy, is styled by some of them *Evangelista*, and *Paulus Propheticus*. Nor was ever the least intimation given of any other sense of it, till, a little before this last century, a new Christianity has endeavoured to get footing in the Christian world.

2. The other opinion is of the later interpreters; amongst whom I account the Jewish, that is, such as have wrote a thousand years since Christ's time; whose opinion in this matter will be found to have this eminent property of falsity, that it is very various. For having departed from the old received interpretation, they are no ways agreed what they shall substitute in the room of it. Some will have the subject of this prophecy to have been the people of Israel. Some, indefinitely, any just or righteous person. Some affirm it to have been Josiah; and one amongst the rest will needs have the person here spoken of to have been the prophet Jeremy. The authors of each of which opinions give us such insipid stories upon this chapter, as are fitter to be ushered in with the grave and solemn preface of "once upon a time" than to be accounted interpretations of the word of God.

Taking it for manifest, therefore, and that upon all the grounds of rational and unforced interpretation, that the person here spoken of was the Messias, and that this Messias could be no other than Jesus of Nazareth, the great Mediator of the second covenant, 'very God, and very man,' in whom every tittle of this prophecy is most exactly verified, and to whom it does most peculiarly and incom-

municably agree : we shall proceed now to take an account of the several parts of the text, in which we have these three things considerable.

First, the suffering itself, ' He was stricken.'

Secondly, the nature of the suffering, which was penal, and expiatory, ' He was stricken for transgression : ' and '

Thirdly, the ground and cause of this suffering, which was God's propriety in, and relation to the persons for whom Christ was stricken, implied in this word, ' my people.' ' For the transgression of my people was he stricken.'

Of each of which in their order : and

I. For the suffering itself : ' He was stricken.' The very word imports violence and invasion from without. It was not a suffering upon the stock of the mere internal weaknesses of nature, which carries the seeds and causes of its dissolution in its own bowels, and so by degrees withers and decays, and at length dies, like a lamp that for want of oil can burn no longer ; but like a torch in its full flame beat and ruffled, and at length blown out, by the breath of a north wind : so was Christ dealt with in the very prime and vigour of his years, being by main force torn and stricken out of the world. Blows did the work of time, and stripes and spears were instead of age to put a period to his afflicted life. Now the greatness of this suffering will be made out to us upon these three accounts.

First, upon the account of the latitude and extent of it.

Secondly, of the intenseness and sharpness of it : and,

Thirdly, of the person inflicting it.

1. As for the latitude or extent of it. The blow reached every part of his humanity, carrying the grief all over, till by an universal diffusion of itself, it entered, according to the Psalmist's expression, 'like water into his bowels, or like oil into his bones.' It spread itself into every part of his body, as if it had been another soul. Nothing was free from suffering that could suffer. Suffering seemed to be his portion, his inheritance, nay his very property. Even the religion, that he came to propagate and establish, was a suffering religion; and, by the severest method of establishment, he gave the first and the greatest instance of it in himself. He, who would recount every part of Christ that suffered, must read a lecture of anatomy. From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there was nothing but the traces of pain and suffering: 'they made long furrows upon his back,' says the Psalmist; they did (as it were) tear and plough up his innocent body. In his person we might have seen grief in its height and supremacy; grief triumphant, crowned and arrayed in purple; grief reigning and doing the utmost that it was able. It is a subject too well known, and too frequently discoursed of, to make descriptions of the thorns, the spears, and the nails that acted their several parts in this tragedy; and that so, that the very narrative of our Saviour's passion cannot but beget another in every pious hearer of it. But when we have said the utmost of his bodily sufferings, we still know that nature has provided a support able to mate and stand up against all these; for the strength and firmness of a resolved mind will bear a man above his infirmity, as the breath bears up the body from sink-

ing : but when the supporter itself fails, when the *primum vivens* and the *ultimum moriens* has had a mortal blow, and the iron enters into the very soul, then baffled nature must surrender and quit the combat, unless seconded and held up by something greater and mightier than itself. And this was our Saviour's condition. There was a sword which reached his very spirit, and pierced his soul, till it bled through his body ; for they were the struggles and agonies of the inward man, the labours and strivings of his restless thoughts, which cast his body into that prodigious sweat. For though it was the flesh that sweated, it was the spirit that took the pains. It was that, which was then 'treading the wine-press of God's wrath alone,' till it made him red in his apparel, and dyed all his garments with blood. What thought can reach, or tongue express, what our Saviour then felt within his own breast ! The image of all the sins of the world for which he was to suffer, then appeared clear and lively, and express, to his mind. All the vile and horrid circumstances of them stood (as it were) particularly ranged before his eyes in all their dismal colours. He saw how much the honour of the great God was abused by them, and how many millions of poor souls they must inevitably have cast under the pressures of a wrath infinite and intolerable, should he not have turned the blow upon himself : the horror of which then filled and amazed his vast apprehensive soul ; and those apprehensions could not but affect his tender heart, then brimful of the highest zeal for God's glory, and the most relenting compassion for the souls of men ; till it fermented and boiled over with transport and agony, and even forced its way through all

his body in those strange ebullitions of blood, not to be paralleled by the sufferings of any person recorded in any history whatsoever. It was this which drew those doleful words from him, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful,' &c. *περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου*. It was surrounded and (as it were) besieged with an army of sorrows. And believe it, his soul was too big, and of too strong a make to bend under an ordinary sorrow. It was not any of those little things, which make us put the finger in the eye, as loss of estate, friends, preferment, interest, and the like; things too mean to raise a tumult in the breast of a resolved stoic, and much less in his, who both placed and preached happiness, not only in the want, but in the very defiance of them.

And now, after this, his agony in the garden, I need not much insist upon the wounds given his reputation by the sword of a blaspheming tongue, the sharpest of all others, and which, like a poisoned dagger, hurting both with edge and venom too, at the same time both makes a wound and prevents its cure. Even a guilty person feels the sting of a malicious report; and if so, much more must one who is innocent; and yet infinitely more must he, who was not only innocent, but innocence itself. Reputation is tender, and for it to be blown upon is to be tainted; like a glass, the clearer and finer it is, the more it suffers by the least breath. And therefore for him, who came to destroy the kingdom of Satan, to be traduced as a partner with, and an agent for Belzebub; for him, whose greatest repasts were prayer and abstinence, and the most rigid severities upon himself, to be taxed as a wine-bibber and a good fellow;

for him, who came into the world, both in life and death to bear witness to the truth, to suffer as an impostor and a deceiver, what could be more grievous and afflicting to a great innocence, joined with as great an apprehension !

However, his church gains this great advantage of comfort by it, that the worst of sufferings comes sanctified to our hands by the person of our grand example; who was reviled and slandered, and tossed upon the tongues of men, before us. A greater martyrdom questionless than to be cast, as the primitive Christians were, to the mouths of lions, which are tender and merciful compared to the mouths of men ; whether we look upon that bitter spirit which acted in those Jews, or in some Christians now a-days, worse than Jews ; men who seem to have outdone all before them in the arts of a more refined malice, and improved calumny ; qualities lately sprung up out of the stock of a spreading atheism, and a domineering, reigning sensuality ; sins now made national and authentic, and so much both judgment and mercy-proof, that it is well if we can be cured without being cut off. But to return to the business before us. We have now seen the first thing setting forth the greatness of this suffering ; to wit, the latitude and extent of it ; as that it seized both body and soul, and every part and faculty of both.

2. The next thing declaring its greatness was the intenseness and sharpness of it. We have seen already how far it went, we are now to consider how deep. It fell not on him like a dew or mist, which only wets the surface of the ground, but like a pouring soaking rain, which descends into the very bowels of it. There was pain enough in

every single part to have been spread in lesser proportions over the whole man. Christ suffered only the exquisiteness and heights of pain, without any of the mitigations which God is pleased to temper and allay it with as it befalls other men; like a man who drinks only the spirits of a liquor separated and extracted from the dull, unactive body of the liquor itself. All the force and activity, the stings and fierceness of that troublesome thing were (as it were) drained and distilled, and abridged into that cup which Christ drank off. There was something sharper than vinegar, and bitterer than gall, which that draught was prepared and made up with. We cannot indeed say, that the sufferings of Christ were long in duration, for to be violent and lasting too, is above the methods or measures of nature. But he who lived at that rate, that he might be said to live an age every hour, was able to suffer so too, and to comprise the greatest torments in the shortest space; which yet by their shortness lost nothing of their force and keenness; as a pen-knife is as sharp as a spear, though not so long. That which promotes and adds to the impressions of pain, is the delicate and exact crisis and constitution of the part, or faculty aggrieved. And there is no doubt but the very fabric and complexion of our Saviour's body was a master-piece of nature, a thing absolutely and exactly framed, and of that fineness as to have the quickest and most sensible touches of every object; and withal to have these advanced by the communion of his admirably made body with his high and vigorous intellectuals. All which made him drink in pain more deeply, feel every lash, every wound with so much a

closer, and a more affecting sense. For it is not to be doubted but a dull fellow can endure the paroxysms of a fever, or the torments of the gout or stone, much better than a man of a quick mind and exalted fancy; because in one, pain beats upon a rock or an anvil, in the other it prints itself upon wax. One is even born with a kind of lethargy and stupefaction into the world, armed with an iron body and a leaden soul against all the apprehensions of ordinary sorrow; so that there is need of some pain to awaken such an one, and to convince him that he is alive; but our Saviour, who had an understanding too quick to let any thing that was intelligible escape it, took in the dolorous afflicting object in its full dimensions. He saw the utmost evil of every one of those strokes, which the guilt of our sins inflicted on him. And what his eye saw, his heart proportionably felt: for surely they must needs have been inconceivably afflicting in the actual endurance, which were so dreadful in their very approach, that the horror of them put 'the man of God's right hand, the man made strong' for that very purpose, to start back, and decline the blow, could the avoidance of it have stood with the decrees of heaven—'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' Which yet was not the voice of cowardice, but of human nature,—nature, which by its first and most essential principle would have saved itself, might it have consisted with the saving of the world.

3. The third thing setting forth the greatness of this suffering, is the cause and author of it, which was God himself. The measure of every passion is the operation of the agent. And then, we know what Omnipotence can do; Omnipotence

employed or rather inflamed by justice, in whose quarrel it was then engaged. We must not measure the divine strokes by the proportion of those blows, which are inflicted by the greatest and most exasperated mortal; the condition of whose nature sets bounds to his power, when it cannot to his rage. So that, in the utmost executions of it, he acts but like a wasp; very angrily indeed, but very weakly. Every blow inflicted by the fiercest tyrant can reach no further than the body; and the body is but the dwelling-place, not any part of the soul; and consequently can no more communicate its ruins to that, than a man can be said to be wounded in his person, because a wall of his house was broken down. Upon which account there have been some whose souls have been so fortified with philosophy and great principles, as to enable them to laugh in Phalaris's bull, to sing upon the rack, and to despise the flames. For still, when God torments us by the instrumental mediation of the creature, his anger can fall upon us in no greater proportions than what can pass through the narrow capacities of a created being. - For be the fountain never so full, yet if it communicates itself by a little pipe, the stream can be but small and inconsiderable, and equal to the measures of the conveyance. God can no more give his power, than his glory, to another; there is no mortal arm can draw his bow. God cannot thunder or lighten by proxy. He alone is the 'Father of spirits,' and none can reach the conscience but he who made it. And therefore, being to discharge the utmost of his vindictive justice upon the sins of mankind then charged upon our Saviour, he took the sword into his own hand, entered the lists, and

dealt with him immediately by himself. And then we find the difference of our Saviour's suffering by the difference of his behaviour. While he was buffeted, scourged, and nailed to the cross, we hear nothing from him, but 'like a lamb before the shearers he was dumb:' not because he could not, but because he scorned to roar under the impressions of a finite anger. But when God reached forth his hand, and darted his immediate rebukes into his very soul and spirit, (as he did while he was hanging upon the cross,) then he cries out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Silence upon such a loss would have been but stupidity, and patience an absurdity; for when God withdrew his presence from him, that darkness which then covered the face of the whole earth, was but a faint emblem of that blacker cloud of despair which had overcast his soul. It is not possible for us to conceive the utmost weight of those heavy strokes inflicted by the Almighty himself upon our Saviour. All the representations and little draughts of them made by words and fancy are vastly short of the keen impressions of sense. But yet that which gives us the nearest resemblance of them, surely, is the torment of a guilty mind under a state of desertion; when God shall turn the 'worm of conscience' into a scorpion, and smite it with the secret invisible stings of his wrath, such as shall fester and rage inwardly, gnaw and rake the very entrails of the soul. The burden and anguish of this has been sometimes so insupportable, that some have professed themselves to envy the condition of Judas and the damned spirits, as thinking the endurance of those flames more tolerable than the expectation, and accord-

ingly have done violence to their own lives, and so fled to hell as to a sanctuary, and chose damnation as a release. Far were such persons (God knows) from bettering their condition by completing that which they could not bear in the very beginnings and forestates of it: yet however it demonstrates to us the unspeakable wretchedness of a guilty soul, labouring under the hand of God. And by the way, let the boldest, the hardiest, and the securest sinner know that God is able, without ever touching him either in his estate, his health, his reputation, or any other outward enjoyment dear to him, but merely by letting a few drops of his wrath fall upon his guilty conscience, so to scald and gall him with the lively sense of sin, that he shall live a continual terror to himself, carry about him a hell in his own breast; which shall echo to him such peals of vengeance every hour, that all the wine and music, all the honours and greatness of the world shall not be able to minister the least ease to his heart-sick and desponding soul. Now in these torments of a guilty conscience we have some little image of the pains then suffered by our Saviour, the greatness of both being founded upon the same reason; namely, that God is the sole and immediate inflicter of such strokes: and then surely the suffering must needs be grievous, when infinite justice passes sentence and infinite power does execution.

And thus I have finished the first general thing proposed from the text, which was the suffering itself, expressed in these words, 'He was stricken,' and that, by considering the latitude, the intenseness, and also the cause of it. All of them

so many arguments to demonstrate to us its unparalleled greatness.

II. The second general thing proposed was the nature and quality of this suffering; namely, that it was penal and expiatory, 'He was stricken for transgression.' And to prove that it was penal, there needs no other argument to any clear, unbiassed understanding than the natural, genuine, and unconstrained use of the word. For what other sense can there be of a man's being stricken or suffering for sin, but his being punished for sin? And that I am sure is spoke so plain and loud by the universal voice of the whole book of God, that Scripture must be crucified as well as Christ, to give any other tolerable sense of it. But since heresy has made such bold invasions upon those sacred writings, we will consider both those senses which these words are asserted to be capable of.

1. First of all then, some assert, that to be stricken for transgression imports not here a punishment for sins past, but a prevention or taking away of sin for the future. So that Christ is said to be stricken, to suffer, and to die for sin, because by all this he confirmed to us an excellent and holy doctrine, the belief of which has in it a natural aptness to draw men off from their sins; in a word, because Christianity tends to make men holy, and cease from sin, and because Christ by his blood sealed the truth of Christianity, therefore is he said 'to die for sin;' a strange and remote deduction, and such an one as the common rules and use of speaking would never have suggested. But then besides because,—it is easy to

come upon the authors of this perverse interpretation, by demanding of them, what fitness there could be in Christ's death to confirm his doctrine? and what reason the world could have to believe Christianity true, because the author of it, a pious, innocent, excellent person, was basely and cruelly put to death?—therefore they further say, that this effect of its confirmation is really and indeed to be ascribed to his subsequent resurrection though only his death be still mentioned; that being the most difficult and heroic passage of all, that he either did or suffered for our sakes, and consequently the greatest instance of his patience, and persuasion of the truth of that doctrine for which he suffered. But, by their favour, if Christ is said no otherwise 'to die for sin,' than because he delivered a doctrine, the design of which was to draw men off from sin, and which was confirmed to be true only by his resurrection; how comes it to pass that this effect is still joined with his death, but never with his resurrection? it being said over and over, that 'he died for sin, suffered and bled for sin,' but never that 'he rose again for sin.' It is, indeed, said once, that he rose again 'for our justification;' but in the very foregoing words it is said, that he was 'delivered to death for our offences.' Which shows that those words 'for our offences,' and 'for our justification,' have there a very different sense, and bear a different relation to the words with which they are joined in that, as well as in the other Scriptures. But this whole invention is so forced and far fetched, and so much out of the road of common reason, that it is impossible it should gain, but by the strengths and prepossessions of prejudice; and where pre-

judice stands for judgment, for aught I see, it is as vain to urge arguments as to quote Scriptures.

2. The other sense of these words, and which alone the Catholic church receives for true, is, that 'Christ being stricken for sin,' signifies his being punished for sin. The word 'for' in this case denoting the antecedent meritorious cause of his suffering, and not the final, as the school of Socinus does assert; and, consequently, must directly relate to the removal of the guilt of sin, and not the power, as is also affirmed by the same persons. Now, that Christ's suffering and 'being stricken for transgression' imports that suffering to have been penal and expiatory, as it might with the highest evidence be demonstrated from several Scriptures, so at this time I shall confine myself within the limits of the chapter, from whence I took my text: and here I shall found the proof of it upon these two expressions,—

First, that Christ is said 'to have borne our sins,' in the 12th verse. Now, 'to bear sin,' is an Hebrew phrase for that which in Latin is *luere peccatum*, and in English, 'to be punished for sin.' And if to bear another man's sin or iniquity by suffering, does not imply the undergoing of the punishment due to that man's sin, we must invent a new way of expounding profane writers as well as sacred, and of interpreting the common speeches of men, as well as the word of God.

Secondly; the other argument shall be taken from that expression which declares Christ to have been made a 'sacrifice,' or an 'offering for sin,' in the 10th verse: 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.' The proof of what I here affirm, is grounded upon the use and design of a sacrifice,

as it has been used by all nations in the world ; which was to appease the Deity by paying down a life for sin, and that by the substitution of a sacrifice, whether of man or beast, to die and pay down his life instead of the sinner. For there was a tacit acknowledgment universally fixed in the hearts of all mankind, ' that the wages of sin was death,' and that, ' without shedding of blood, there could be no remission : ' upon which was built the reason of all their sacrifices and victims. So surely, therefore, as Christ was a sacrifice, and as the design of a sacrifice is to pay down a life for sin, and as to pay down a life for sin is to be punished for sin, so sure it is, that Christ's death and sufferings were penal. Now, it being clear that the foundation of all punishment is compensation or exchange ; that is to say, something paid down to divine justice for something done against it ; and since all compensation implies a retribution equivalent to the injury done ; therefore, that Christ might be qualified to be a sacrifice fit to undergo the full punishment due for the sins of mankind, two things were required.

1. An infinite dignity in his person ; for since the evil and demerit of sin was infinite ; and since Christ was so to suffer for it, as not to remain under those sufferings for an infinite duration ; that infinity, therefore, was to be made up some other way ; which could not be, but by the infinite worth and dignity of his person, grasping in all the perfections and glories of the Deity, and by consequence deriving an infinite value to his sufferings.

2. The other qualification required was a perfect innocence in the person to suffer ; for so much was specified by the Paschal lamb, of which we still read in Scripture, ' That it was to be a lamb without blemish.' And there is no doubt, but had

Christ had any sin of his own to have satisfied for, he had been very unable to satisfy for other men's. He who is going to gaol for his own debts, is very unfit to be a security of another's.

But now this perfect innocence, which I affirm necessary to render Christ a fit and proper sacrifice, is urged by our adversaries to be the very reason why Christ's sufferings could not be penal; since punishment, in the very nature and essence of it, imports a relation to sin. To this I answer, that punishment does indeed import an essential relation to sin; but not of necessity to the sin of the person upon whom it is inflicted: as might be evinced by innumerable instances, as well as undeniable reasons.

If it be replied, that God has declared, 'that the soul that sins shall die,' I answer; that this is only a positive law, according to which God declares he will proceed in the ordinary course of his providence; but it is not of natural and eternal obligation, so as universally to bind God in all cases; but that he may, when he pleases, deal otherwise with his creature. But this will receive further light from the discussion of the third and last general head, to which we now proceed. Namely,

III. The ground and cause of this suffering; which was God's propriety in, and relation to the persons for whom Christ suffered, specified in these words, 'My people:—' For the transgression of my people was he stricken.'

If it be here asked, upon what account the persons here spoken of were denominated and made God's people? I answer, that they were so by an eternal covenant and transaction between the Father and the Son; by which the Father, upon certain

conditions to be performed by the Son, consigned over some persons to him to be his people. For our better understanding of which we are to observe, that the business of man's redemption proceeds upon a two-fold covenant.

First, an eternal covenant made between the Father and the Son, by which the Father agreed to give both grace and glory to a certain number of sinners, upon condition that Christ would assume their nature, and pay down such a ransom to his justice, as should both satisfy for their sin, and withal merit such a measure of grace as should effectually work in them all things necessary to their salvation. And this covenant may be properly called 'a covenant of suretyship or redemption.' Upon which alone and not upon any covenant made between God and men in their own persons, is built the infallibility of the future believing, repenting, and finally persevering, of such as Christ from all eternity undertook to make his people.

Secondly; the other is a covenant made in time, and actually entered into by God and men; by which God on his part promises to men eternal salvation, upon condition of faith and repentance on theirs. And this is called in Scripture 'the second covenant, or 'the covenant of grace,' and stands opposed to that which is there called 'the first covenant,' or 'the covenant of works.'

Now, by that eternal compact or transaction between the Father and the Son (of which alone we now speak) was this donation of a certain determinate number of persons made to Christ, to be his people; by virtue of which agreement or transaction he was in the fulness of time to suffer for them, and to accomplish the whole work of their

redemption from first to last. For to affirm that Christ died only to verify a proposition, (that whosoever believed should be saved,) but in the meantime to leave the whole issue of things in reference to persons so loose and undetermined, that it was a question, whether ever any one should actually believe, and very possible that none ever might; and consequently, that after Christ had suffered, had been stricken, and died for transgression, yet, for any thing that he had done, in all this, he might never have had a people; this certainly is a strange and new gospel, and such as the doctrine of our church seems utterly unacquainted with.

Having thus shown the foundation upon which the persons here spoken of are called by the prophet, 'God's people;' namely, an eternal covenant, in which God the Father and the Son mutually agreed upon the terms of their redemption; we are now to observe, that the same thing that thus denominates and makes them God's people, makes them under the same relation to belong also to Christ, and that not only upon the account of his nature, that he was God, but chiefly of his office, that he was their Mediator; which capacity made him equally concerned in that eternal covenant; he accepting and agreeing to those terms that were proposed, and offered him by the Father. By his acceptance of which he became both a mystical head, and a surety to those for whom he so undertook. And this relation of his to them was the cause, why he both might be, and actually was stricken by God for their transgression, without any violation of the divine justice, notwithstanding the perfect innocence of his person. For to render it just to inflict a punishment

upon an innocent person instead of another, either of these two causes are sufficient: First, an intimate conjunction between those persons; and that either natural as between father and son, or political, as between king and people, and the like: Or, secondly, the voluntary consent and will of an innocent person to undergo the punishment due to the nocent; as it is between a man and his surety.

Accordingly, from that covenant by which the Father made over a certain number of persons to the Son to be his people, there arose this twofold relation of Christ to them:—

1. Of a king to his people, or of a mystical head to his members; so that legally and politically they suffered as really in Christ, as the whole body suffers when the head is wounded, or struck through with a dart.

2. The other relation is of a surety: so that the satisfaction paid down by Christ to God's justice for sin, is, in estimation of law, as really accounted to be paid down by the saints, as if they had paid it in their own persons.

And this is a further, and withal a full answer to that objection formerly hinted from the innocence of Christ's person, as if it rendered him incapable punishment. For his own free voluntary consent to be a surety for sinners, and responsible for all that divine justice could charge them with, transferred the guilt and obligation from their persons to his own.

In a word, the compact between Christ and his Father, made him a king, a mystical head, and also a surety to some certain persons; and his being so, made them his people, and their being his people

did, upon that account, make it both just and equitable for him to suffer, and 'to be stricken for their transgression;' which is the result of the text, and the thing undertook by us to be proved.

I have now finished the several things proposed from the text: in which, having set before you how much Christ has suffered, and all for our sakes, I hope it will kindle the workings of a pious ingenuity in every one of our breasts. For I am sure, if Christ's suffering for us were the doctrine, gratitude should make our readiness to suffer for him the application. Christianity I have shown was a suffering religion; and there are two sorts of suffering to which it will certainly expose every genuine professor of it.

The first is from himself.

The second from the world.

1. And, first, it will engage him in a suffering from himself; even that grand suffering of self-denial and mortification, the sharpest and most indispensable of all others, in which every Christian is not only to be the sufferer, but himself also the executioner. 'He who is Christ's,' says the apostle, 'has crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' A severe discipline certainly, in which a man is to act his fiercest anger upon his dearest friends. For could nature ever yet suggest to any one the 'hatred of his own flesh?' the crucifixion of his desires, and the stabbing of his most beloved affections? Nature indeed cannot, will not prompt it; but Christianity, which rises many strains above nature, both must and will. The best sacrifice to a crucified Saviour is a crucified lust, a bleeding heart, and a dying corruption. We can-

not bring, nor indeed does Christ expect, a recompense for what he has suffered for us; yet that, which he will accept, as if it were a recompense, is for us to deal cruelly with that body of sin, which has caused the acting of all those cruelties upon him. Let the ambitious man lay his pride in the dust, the covetous man deposit his treasures in the banks of charity and liberality, and let the voluptuous epicure renounce his cups and his whores; and this will be a present to heaven better than a whole hecatomb; nor could 'the fruit of his body' fall so grateful 'a sacrifice upon God's altars,' as 'the sin of his soul.' But it is like, the jolly world about us will but scoff at the paradox of such practices, and explode them as madness and melancholy: yet let those sons of pleasure know, that such as scorn to be thus melancholy in this world, will have but little cause to be merry in the next.

2. The other kind of suffering in which Christianity will engage a man is from the world. Such is the genius and nature of the Christian religion, that it must unavoidably bring him, who owns it, in the power of it, under temporary troubles and afflictions. 'In the world,' says Christ, 'ye shall have tribulation.' And he spoke it not so much by a spirit of prophecy, as philosophy: and by an actual sight of it in its pregnant causes. For the contrariety of the principles and maxims of Christianity to those of the world, cannot but engage men in such practices as shall also thwart the customs and modes which govern the actions of the world. But where there is contrariety there will be fighting; and where there is fighting, the weaker I am sure, must suffer; and generally the Christian is so in all worldly encounters, whose chief

defensatives lie not in that armour that is sword-proof, or bullet-proof; and who wears no breast-plate upon but within his breast; that is, his innocence, his conscience, and his confidence in a reconciled God. Suffering is a thing which all men abhor, and that because they are ashamed of it; and their being so is grounded upon this opinion, that 'to suffer,' in the very nature of it, seems to impeach the suffering person, either in the reputation of his power, or of his innocence; that is, he suffers, either because he is weak and cannot hinder it, or because he is faulty and so deserves it. But with every Christian Christ is an abundant answer to both these objections. For when we see Omnipotence hanging upon the cross, and God himself scourged and spit upon; and when we see him who could have commanded fire from heaven, and legions of angels to his rescue, yet surrendering himself quietly to the will of his murderers, surely no mortal man, who is but dirt, and worms-meat at the best, can pretend himself too great, and too high to suffer. And again, when we behold virtue, innocence, and purity, more than angelical, crucified between thieves and malefactors, shall any man whose birth and actions revile and speak him a sinner to his face, think himself too good to come under the cross, and to take his share in the common lot of Christianity? It is not the suffering itself, but the cause of it that is dishonourable. And even in the worst and most shameful of sufferings, though the hangman does the execution, yet it is the crime alone which does the disgrace.

Christ commands us nothing, but he enforces it with arguments from his person as well as from his word; and it is well if we can make a due use of

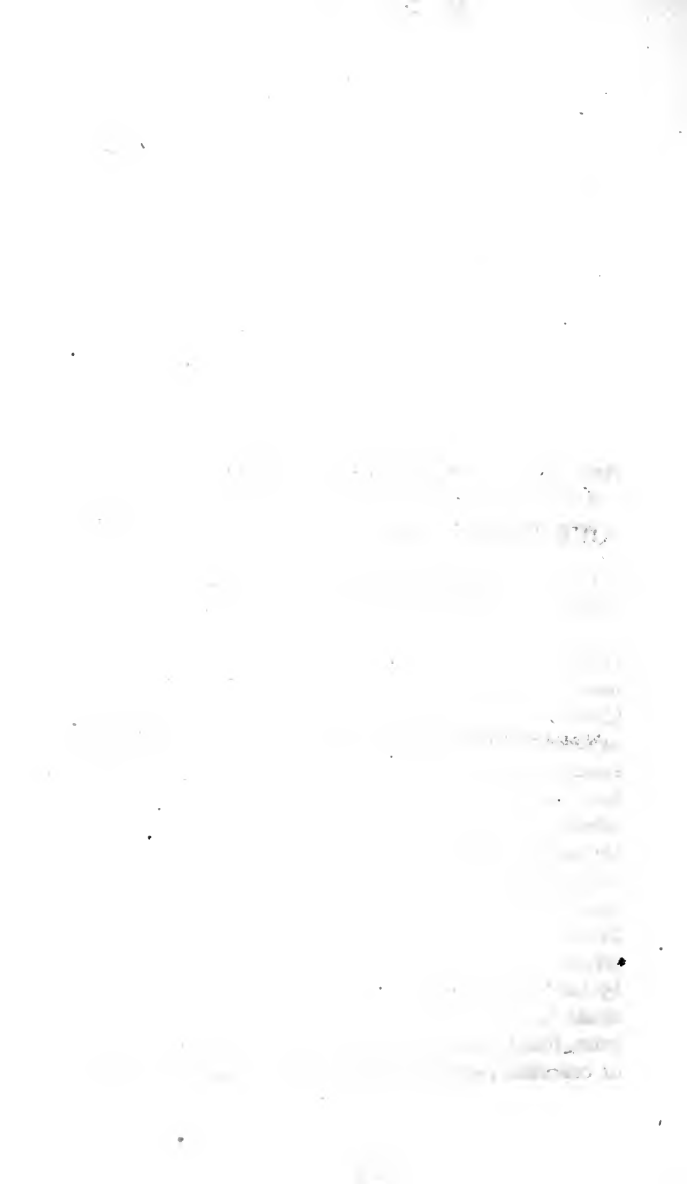
them. For God knows how soon he may call us from our easy speculations, and theories of suffering, to the practical experience of it,—how soon he may draw us forth for persecution and the fiery trial. Only this we may be sure of, that if these things be brought upon us for his honour, it will be for ours too to endure them. And be our distresses never so great, our calamities never so strange, and unusual, yet we have both our Saviour's example to direct, and his promise to support us, who has left it upon record in his everlasting gospel, 'That if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.'

To whom, therefore, be rendered and ascribed, as is most due, all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and for evermore. *Amen.*



SERMON XII.
OUR LORD'S OBEDIENCE UNTO DEATH.
BY BISHOP BEVERIDGE.,

[**WILLIAM BEVERIDGE** was born in 1637: in 1704 he was consecrated Bishop of St. Asaph, and died in 1708.]



S E R M O N XII.

PHILIPPIANS, II. 8.

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

HE that reads and firmly believes what is here written, cannot but fall down and worship God, adoring that infinite wisdom, justice, and mercy that he manifested in the redemption of fallen man; for here we read, that our Redeemer Jesus Christ, being in the form, subsisting in the nature or essence, of God, ‘thought it not robbery to be equal with God.’ He did not think that he robbed God of any glory, or offered him any injury or affront, by asserting himself to be equal to him, of the same substance, wisdom, power, and all other perfections with him. Yet nevertheless, this glorious, eternal, infinite, almighty Person, subsisting thus in the form of God, made himself of no reputation. He emptied, debased, humbled himself, by taking upon him the form of a servant; being made in the likeness of men, a real and perfect man, like to the rest of mankind in all the integral or essential parts of a man. And being thus found

in fashion or habit as a man, in such a soul and body as other men have, he humbled himself lower yet, becoming obedient, or subject to those laws, which he, as Lord of all, had made for others, not only all his life, but even to death itself; and that too, not any ordinary or common death, but the most painful, the most shameful, the most accursed death that any mortal could undergo, even 'the death of the cross.'

Oh mystery of mysteries! that God himself should become man, and die, and die upon the cross too! Who can think of it without astonishment and admiration? Especially if we consider withal the ends and reasons of it, which are altogether as great and mysterious as the thing itself. Certainly, if we do that, we shall need no other arguments to persuade us to join with the Catholic church in the celebration of it, as we do this day.

This therefore is that which I shall now offer at; even to consider the great ends and reasons, why this divine person, subsisting in the form or nature of God, took upon him the form or nature of man, and so died. Not that I think it possible for me fully to comprehend, much less to explain, so great a mystery; which I can no sooner cast my eye upon, but it is immediately dazzled with the glory and splendour of it. Howsoever, it being a matter wherein we are all so highly concerned, and having it delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures, in as plain and perspicuous terms as the nature of the thing would bear, I shall from thence endeavour to express my thoughts of it, as clearly as I can; humbly beseeching him of whom I speak, so to assist and direct me in speak-

ing of him, that I may utter nothing but what is agreeable to his word, and becoming his honour and majesty.

First, therefore, we may consider, that although the most high God be infinitely happy in himself, yet he made all things for himself, even for his own glory, which is the ultimate end of this, and of all his other actions. Wherefore, when he made the world, he made two sorts of creatures in it, capable of reflecting upon, and acknowledging those glorious perfections which he displayed in the creation of it; and they were angels and men; all which he made not only rational and free agents, and so able to do the work they were made for; but likewise of such a temper and constitution, that their only ease and happiness consisted in the doing of it.

The first of these, viz. the angels, being all made, and actually existing, together, although most of them continued in the same state in which they were created, yet others fell from it, degenerating into wicked and impure spirits; which not answering the end of their creation, are always uneasy and restless in their minds, and tormented with the sense of their sin, and of the wrath of their almighty Creator against them for it.

But as for men, it was not so with them; for they never did, nor ever will, till the end of the world, all actually exist together. But at first, only one man was made, and endued with power to propagate his kind to others, and so successively, till the whole number of individuals, or persons that God designed of that nature, should be made up.

But howsoever, seeing all mankind were to pro-

ceed from, and so were virtually contained in the first man, who was therefore called Adam, that is, man in general; hence if he had stood, all mankind must needs have stood with him; but he falling, all fell with him into the same wretched and miserable estate with the devils or apostate angels before spoken of.

So that now of the two sorts of creatures which God made on purpose to know, worship, and enjoy him that made them, a great part of the one and all the other were lost and undone, as to all the intents and purposes of their creation, and are become of themselves as sinful and miserable, as they were designed by God to be holy and happy for ever.

And now there is occasion given for the manifesting two divine perfections, which otherwise could not have been exerted, even vindictive justice and mercy; both which suppose sin and guilt; for if none had ever sinned, none could ever have been justly punished, nor would any have stood in need of mercy. For though God is good, and kind, and gracious, and bountiful to all his creatures, he could not properly be said to be merciful to any, but to such as have contracted guilt, and so deserved punishment at his hands; as many of the angels, and all mankind had now done, and so were become proper objects either of his justice or mercy, or both, as he should see good to exercise them.

Wherefore the apostate angels having all sinned, every one in his own person, God was pleased to execute his justice and vengeance upon them to the utmost extremity, having condemned them all to everlasting fire, which, as our Saviour tells

us, 'is prepared for the devil and his angels.'¹ And therefore St. Peter saith, that 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.'² And St. Jude, that 'the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.'³ So that not one of them can ever escape, but they are all made standing, everlasting monuments of the divine vengeance, and just indignation against sin, never to be appeased.

And the same might justly have been the condition of all mankind too; for they all sinned in their common head, and so fell from their first estate, as well as the apostate angels, and therefore have deserved the same punishment which was inflicted upon them. But howsoever, seeing they did not all actually consent in their own persons to the sin of their first parents, but only in their general nature, which was then contained wholly in them; hence their great and most gracious Creator was pleased to show mercy towards them, but so as to manifest his justice also, both against that original, and all the actual sins they should ever be guilty of, so as to make them the objects both of his justice and of his mercy too: of his justice, by punishing the sins they had committed; and of his mercy, by pardoning those who had committed them, upon such easy terms, that if it be not their own personal faults, they

¹ Matt. xxv. 41.² 2 Pet. ii. 4.³ Jude, 6.

may be all restored to the same estate of bliss and happiness from which they fell.

For this therefore it was that Christ came into the world, for this it was that he did and suffered so much when here, and for this it was that he died upon the cross; even for the exaltation of God's justice and mercy, and so for the advancing of his glory in the redemption of mankind from the state of sin and misery, into which they were fallen, to a state of grace and salvation.

Now we being all in the number of those to whom the great Creator of the world hath been thus infinitely merciful as well as just, it must needs behove us very much to understand and apprehend this great mystery aright, that so we may be duly affected with it, and thankful for it, and know what to do, that we may be really and eternally the better for it.

For which purpose, therefore, we may consider, first, that the person who undertook our redemption, was none of the creatures that God had made, but his only Son, whom he had begotten from eternity, by communicating his own essence to him; who is therefore here said to subsist in the form or essence of God. He subsists in it, and so is a distinct person or subsistence in it; but in that he subsists in it, he must needs be of it; it being impossible that any thing should subsist in the essence of God, but what is of that essence. Hence he is truly and properly 'God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one substance or essence with the Father,' as the first general council determined out of the holy Scriptures, and the catholic church hath always

held, both before and since. Indeed there is no one truth more clearly revealed in the gospel than this is. And it is but necessary it should be so; this being the very foundation of our religion, and of all our hopes of being saved in it: take away this, and our redemption falls to the ground, as being built wholly upon the divine power and nature of our Redeemer. And therefore, Turks and Socinians, and all such as deny the divinity of our Saviour, do thereby deny him to be our Saviour too, and so make themselves incapable of being ever saved by him. But blessed be God, we have better learnt Christ; being fully assured, out of his holy word, that though he be a distinct person from the Father, he is the same God, of the same divine power and nature with him.

This divine person, therefore, subsisting 'in the form of God,' having undertaken our redemption, for the effecting of it, took upon him 'the form of a servant,' the nature of man; not of this or that particular man, but of man in general. So that the whole human nature which was contained in Adam, was now assumed by Christ, who is therefore called Adam too; that is, as I observed before, man in general. 'The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.'¹ Hence he is called also the 'second man' by the same apostle, saying, 'The first man was of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven.'² Why the second man? but because he was looked upon as become man from the time that he was first promised, when there was not another man besides in the world, but only the

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 45.

² Ibid, v. 47

first man Adam; and especially, because he was the next man in general after Adam. All other men betwixt them being only particular human persons, but Adam and Christ, sustained the whole human nature. In which sense, as Adam was the first, Christ was properly the second man. Neither is this a mere airy speculation, but so great, so necessary a truth, that our salvation depends very much upon it; for all mankind being contained, and therefore sinning in the first man Adam, unless there be another Adam or man in general found out, who hath borne the punishment of that sin, all mankind must still be subject to it: whereas there being now another Adam set up, in whom the whole nature of man, and so all mankind, is contained, as well as in the first, by him we may be all freed from the sin we contracted, and so repair all the losses we sustained in the first Adam, and be made as righteous by the one, as we were made sinners by the other; as the apostle proves at large.¹

But here we must further observe, that the human nature which the Son of God assumed, having no subsistence out of the divine person who assumed it, it could not make a person of itself distinct from the divine, but was so united to it, that although he had two distinct natures, the one divine, communicated to him by the Father from eternity, the other human, assumed by himself in time, and so was really both God and man; yet he was not one person as God, and another as man, but he was only one person both as God and man; as the third general council determined against

¹ Rom. v.

Nestorius. And the same may be fully demonstrated, not only from many particular places in the holy gospel, but likewise from the whole scope and design of it; for if he had been one person as God, and another person as man, then all his sufferings as man, being the sufferings only of a finite person, would have terminated in himself, and could never have reached the rest of mankind. Whatsoever he might have merited for himself, he could not have merited any thing for us, by them; in that he underwent them only as a mere human person, such as every one of us is. So that by this means we should still be where we were, lost and undone for ever. Whereas on the contrary, Christ, both as God and man, being only one, and that a divine and infinite person, whatsoever he did or suffered in his human nature, being done and suffered by an infinite person, it could not but be of infinite worth and value, and so be able to reach and profit all that should or could ever partake of that nature wherein it was done or suffered; for be they never so many, both they and their number is still but finite; whereas his merits could not but be, like himself, infinite.

But this being the great article upon which the main stress of our salvation depends, it may not be amiss to confirm and explain it a little further to you: for which purpose I might produce many of Christ's own sayings, and as many passages out of the writings of his holy apostles, which make it both certain and clear. But I shall instance only in those words of St. Paul to the Asian bishops, 'Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath

purchased with his own blood.'¹ Where we find it expressly said, that God hath purchased the church with his own blood; which could not possibly be, unless the same person who was God, had blood wherewith to purchase it. But this blood could be no other but the blood of the human nature; which if it had been an human person, it could not have been truly called, as it is here, the blood of God. But seeing the blood which Christ shed as man was most certainly what it was here called, even the blood of God, an infinite person, it could not but be of sufficient value to purchase the whole church, as it is here said to have done.

From hence, therefore, we may infallibly conclude, that, although the two natures in Christ were preserved entire and distinct from one another, after as well as before their union to one person, as the fourth general council declared against Eutyches and his followers; yet they were so united to one person, that whatsoever was done in either nature, was still done by one and the same person. And by consequence, that whatsoever Christ either did or suffered as man, was done and suffered by one who was really and truly God: when Christ, as man, was derided, God was derided; when he was sorrowful, God was sorrowful; when he was crucified, it might be truly said that God was crucified; for so the apostle himself speaks, saying, that 'they crucified the Lord of glory,'² which is the same in effect, as if he had said, they crucified God.

If we carry these truths along with us, they will give us great light into the mystery of our salvation

¹ Acts, xx. 28.

² 1 Cor. ii. 8.

by Christ: for, seeing he was really and truly God, of the same nature with the Father, and became really and truly man, of the same nature with us, so as to be still but one person, both as God and man; hence, it necessarily follows, that when he 'humbled himself, and became obedient,' as it is here said, the obedience which he performed infinitely exceeded the most perfect obedience that all mankind could ever have performed, if they had continued in their first and best estate. For their obedience could have been no more than what was due to God, and at the highest it would have been the obedience only of finite creatures; whereas, his was the obedience of God himself, which could not be properly said to be due to himself. And therefore it is here said, 'that he humbled himself, by becoming obedient,' as the Greek words import; for, he having no previous obligations upon him to observe those laws which he himself had prescribed to mankind, it was great humility and condescension in him to obey them. It is true, as man, he was bound to obey God, as other men are. But no man ever was, or could be bound to perform divine obedience, such as Christ performed in his manhood united to a divine person, which was so exceeding great, such infinite obedience, that it could not but be of as great, as infinite value and merit for mankind, in whose nature he performed it.

Especially, considering that he was obedient, not only through the whole course of his life, but as the apostle here saith, 'unto death;' unto death, not as the object, but the great and last subject of his obedience. God had said to the first Adam, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death.' And the second Adam accordingly died

the death, even the death of the cross, in which were contained all the shame, the pain, and curses that were due to the sins of mankind; which death being undergone by the whole nature of man, in the person of God, and so by God himself, it was more in itself, and more satisfactory to the divine justice, than if all human persons in the world should have suffered eternal death; for theirs could have been no more than the death of finite persons; which, if it could ever satisfy divine justice, would not be eternal. But his being the death of an infinite person, it could not be but of infinite value, and therefore as much as justice itself could require for sins committed against a person that is infinite. And it being undergone in the nature of man, all the infinite value, merit, and satisfaction that is in it, must needs have respect or relation to those only, and to all those who partake of that nature. And therefore it is said, that 'Christ tasted death for every man;'¹ that he gave himself a ransom for all;² that 'he was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world:'³ that is, as our church expresseth it, "He by his one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world, or of all mankind, in whose nature he did it."

Now, these things being considered, it is easy to see what grounds we have to hope for pardon and salvation by Christ; for, in order to the pardon of our sins, it was first necessary that God's law and justice should be satisfied for the injury and dishonour he hath received by them. But this Christ

¹ Heb. ii. 9.² 1 Tim. ii. 6.³ 1 John, ii. 2.

hath now done more effectually by dying in the human nature, than all human persons could have done by dying eternally. So that it will be no violation of his justice to pardon our sins, seeing his own Son hath undergone the punishment which was due unto him for them. Upon whose account, therefore, he is now ready to show us so much mercy, as to discharge and acquit us of all our sins, and to receive us again into his grace and favour upon our repentance and submission.

And seeing both reason and justice require that we should repent of our sins, and turn to God, before we be pardoned by him; Christ hath merited this also for us; and therefore is now exalted by the right hand of God, 'to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins:'¹ first repentance, and then remission. So that now, by reason of his infinite merits, he hath power, not only to pardon our sins if we do repent, but to give us repentance also, that so they may be pardoned. Where, by repentance, we are to understand all manner of grace and power to do whatsoever is required of us in order to our pardon and salvation: it is now all at Christ's disposal. Inasmuch, that as he himself tells us, 'without him we can do nothing.'² But, as his apostle saith, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.'³

But, notwithstanding the continual supplies of grace and virtue from Christ, whereby we are sanctified or made sincerely holy; yet, by reason of the remainder of sins in us, neither our persons nor our actions are perfectly righteous, and, by con-

¹ Acts, v. 31.

² John, xv. 5.

³ Phil. iv. 13.

sequence, not acceptable in themselves to God. But this also our blessed Saviour hath taken care of, making up the defects and imperfections, both of our persons and duties, with that most perfect and divine obedience which he performed in our natures. By which means we may be justified or accepted of, and accounted as righteous before God, as if we were exactly so in ourselves : so that, 'as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.'

But, 'many?' you may say—Why not all? Christ did not take upon him the person or persons of one or more particular men, but the nature of man in general, and died in it: why then are not all saved that are of that nature? To which I answer, it is true, it is indeed a great wonder, that Christ having died in the nature of man, and so put all mankind into a capacity of being saved by him, yet that all should not be saved by him. But this certainly cannot be imputed to any defect or insufficiency in his merits, or power to save them; but it must be wholly their own faults, in that they will not do what God requires, in order to their having the merits of Christ's obedience and sufferings, in their human nature, applied and made over to their own particular human persons; that is, they will not believe in him, nor trust in those promises which are made and sealed to us in his blood. For this is the great condition required on our parts, in order to our partaking of what he hath merited for us; as appears from the whole tenor of the gospel, yea, from Christ's own express words, who best

knew upon what terms we should be saved by him. For 'God so loved the world,' saith he, 'that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'¹ 'He that believeth in him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God.'² And elsewhere, 'He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.'³

There are many such expressions dispersed over the whole Bible; - which plainly show that the main thing required of us, in order to our being saved by Christ, is to believe in him, to have a sure trust and confidence on him, for all things necessary to our salvation.

And the first and great thing we must believe and trust in him for, is for grace to repent and forsake our sins; for such a measure of his Holy Spirit, whereby we may mortify the deeds of the flesh, and be sanctified throughout in soul, body and spirit. For though our human nature in general, be sanctified by its being united to the divine person, no human person in particular can be sanctified, but by 'partaking of the divine nature,' communicated to us by the operation of the Holy Spirit, which Christ is always ready to give to those who believe in him for it;⁴ insomuch, that whosoever doth not receive grace and assistance from him to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, he may pretend what he will, but he doth not believe in Christ as he ought; for

¹ John, iii. 16.
Mark, xvi. 16.

² Ibid. v. 18.
⁴ John, vii. 38, 39.

if he did, he could not fail of being purified and made holy by him. This being the great end why Christ gave himself for us, 'that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'¹

When by our believing in Christ, we have thus obtained power and grace to repent of our sins, then we may, and ought, to trust in him also for the pardon of those sins which we have thus repented of; steadfastly believing, that how many and great soever our former sins have been, yet that now, upon our hearty and sincere repentance of them, God hath absolved us from them all, for Christ Jesus's sake, and hath accepted of that death and punishment which his own Son underwent in our natures, as if it had been undergone by us in our own persons; so as to be now as perfectly reconciled to us, as if he had never been offended at all with us; yea, that he doth not only pardon and forgive us what is past, but he reckons us in the number of righteous persons, and accepts of us as such, in his beloved Son; who knowing no sin in himself, 'was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'² And not only our persons, but that our actions also, even our sincere, though imperfect duties and good works, are all acceptable to God through Jesus Christ our Lord;³ and that, being thus justified by him in time, we shall be glorified with him for evermore.⁴

By such a regular and lively faith as this (which always works by love) none of us but may be really

¹ Tit. ii. 14.

² 1 Peter, ii. 5.

³ 2 Cor. v. 21.

⁴ Rom. viii 30

interested in all these glorious things which the Son of God hath purchased for us with his own blood ; for faith, as the apostle tells us, ‘ is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.’¹ It is the substance of things hoped for ;—that is, of whatsoever good things we hope for upon the account of what Christ hath done and suffered for us, and God hath promised to us for his sake. Faith is the very substance of them to us ; it causeth them to subsist in us, and so puts us into the actual possession of them. As, do we hope for Christ’s Holy Spirit to sanctify and make us holy ? By faith, as we dwell in Christ, Christ’s Spirit dwells in us ; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us ; and so we have the ‘ substance ’ of what we hope for, even his divine nature subsisting virtually in us, as our human nature really subsisted in him. And therefore Christ himself saith, ‘ that we are sanctified by faith that is in him.’² Do we hope for Christ’s merits to pardon and justify us before God ? Faith is the substance of them to us ; applying and appropriating all the merits of Christ’s obedience and sufferings in our nature to our own particular person. And therefore it is that we are so often said to be justified by faith, not as it is a work in us, but as it is the substance of Christ’s righteousness to us, so that we also are accounted as righteous by it.

The same may be said of all the great blessings which Christ hath purchased for us, and God hath promised to us in him, and which by consequence we hope for from him. Faith is so the substance of them to us, that by it we actually obtain and

¹ Heb. xi. 1.

² Acts, xxvi. 18.

enjoy them. Insomuch, that they who have a strong and steadfast faith in Christ, are so fully possessed of God's love and mercy in him, that nothing is able to remove them from it. A remarkable instance whereof we have in St. Paul, who acting his faith and confidence in his Saviour, cries out in a triumphant manner, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword! Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'¹

Thus have I endeavoured to unfold, as much as I could, of the great mystery of our salvation by Christ. I am very sensible, that there are many things in it, which we are not able to conceive, and that we may conceive much more than we are able to express. Howsoever, from these great and necessary truths which we have now premised, as plainly revealed in the gospel, and therefore believed always by the catholic church, none of us but may easily discern what cause we have to believe that mankind in general, and by consequence all we in particular, notwithstanding our fall from

¹ Rom. viii. 33, &c.

our first estate, are now capable of obtaining eternal bliss and happiness, which the fallen angels are not capable of. For they, as they have all sinned against God, so they must all bear every one the punishment of his own sins in his own person; there being no other way whereby Almighty God can manifest his justice and displeasure against them for it; for as the apostle observes, the Son of God took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; and therefore the apostate angels are never the better for all his sufferings as not being undergone in their nature. And therefore their case is desperate, their misery unavoidable. It is true, they know and believe there is a God, but they cannot trust on him, nor expect any mercy from him; for he never promised them any. And therefore they 'believe and tremble,' as knowing that God is always angry with them, and can by no means be ever reconciled to them. And hence it is, that they can never repent of their sins; and if they did, it would stand them in no stead. No: sentence is past upon them, they are all condemned to everlasting fire. And there is no remedy, but they must endure it for ever.

But blessed be God, the case is not so with us; for he himself hath provided us a Saviour, an all-sufficient Saviour, one who is able to save to the utmost 'all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

Indeed, this is that which crowns all the rest; that as he once died to make satisfaction for us upon earth, he ever lives to make intercession for us in heaven, where he now is in our nature united

¹ Heb. vii. 25.

to his divine person ; upon which account, God hath so highly exalted him, even as he is man, that he ' hath given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'¹ So that he is now ' advanced above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name which is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and God hath put all things under his feet, and hath given him to be head of all things to the church.'² Such a glorious Saviour have we now in heaven, whom the angels themselves are bound to worship and continually do it : and though his manhood be only in heaven, his divine person, to which that manhood is united, is every where upon earth too. So that be we where we will, he is always present with us, and we may make our applications to him when we please. When we are at our devotions, public or private, he is there ready to assist and perfume them with his own merits. When we are in secret, where no body else sees us, be sure he doth. When we are in straits, and know not whither else to go for help, we may still go to him ' who loved us and gave himself for us ;' and hath therefore told us, that ' those that come to him, he will in no wise cast out.'³

This therefore is that which I would now advise you to. For which purpose you must give me leave to speak freely to you, for I come not to you

¹ Phil. ii. 9, 10.² Eph. i. 21, 22.³ John, vi. 37.

in my own name, but in his name who died for you, who redeemed you to himself with his own blood, and therefore may well be allowed to be plain with you.

That you are all sinners, I need not tell you; but I must tell you, that as ye are sinful, ye cannot but be miserable too; yea, therefore miserable because sinful; so miserable, that ye are all by nature the children of wrath, whatsoever outward prosperity ye may seem to enjoy. Ye are always liable not only to be stripped of that, but to be tormented with all the pain, and shame, and horror, that either your souls or bodies are capable of; for he that made you, is angry with you, and incensed against you. And what will you do, if he should rise up to take vengeance of you, for breaking those wise, and good, and righteous laws, that he hath set before you? Can you be able to dwell with everlasting burnings, or endure the scorplings of a consuming fire? How would you be amazed and confounded if you should see Omnipotence itself setting itself against you; glory, majesty, justice, yea, goodness and mercy itself frowning upon you, demeaning itself as angry and displeased with you, and therefore pouring down fury, vengeance and indignation upon you every moment?

Yet this is no more than what your sins have made you all obnoxious to. Insomuch, that if you look no further than yourselves, you have no ground to expect one moment's respite out of the infernal flames, 'prepared for the devil and his angels.'

Consider this, and then tell me, what you think

of a Saviour, one who can save you from your sins, and from the wrath of God that is due unto you for them? One that can reconcile almighty God to you, and you to him? One who can alter your estate and disposition too, so as to make you equal to the holy angels themselves both in grace and glory? How happy would the fiends of hell account themselves, if they had such a Saviour! How earnestly would they flock after him, and strive which should embrace and love him most, which should serve and please him best, that so they might be restored by him to their former estate again! But this is a happiness which they can never hope for, it being designed only for mankind. But it being designed for mankind in general, all you that hear me at this time may not only hope for it, but you may have it too if ye will; nay, it is God's pleasure and command you should; for he would have all men to be saved, and by consequence you amongst the rest. And therefore if any of you be not, the only reason is, because ye will not. 'Ye will not,' as Christ said, 'come to him, that ye might have life.'¹ And no wonder then if you be not saved, when ye will not come to him who alone can do it.

But are there any such men in the world?—men that will not be saved, though they may?—men that refuse happiness when it is proffered them, and had rather continue in sin and misery, than to be freed from it? I wish there were not, but fear there are too many such amongst ourselves; some that think they can save themselves, and therefore will not be beholden to Christ for it;

¹ John, v. 40.

others so much in love with sin, that they will not part from it for all that Christ hath purchased for them, and therefore will not go to him, for fear lest he should make them holy. But the greatest part of mankind, and of those also who have given up their names to Christ, are so much taken with the sensible objects they converse with here below, that they prefer them before all that the Son of God hath or ever can do for them! Ungrateful wretches! Is this the return you make the Son of God for all his love and kindness to you! What could he have done—what could he have suffered—what could he have procured more for you, than he hath done? And is all this nothing?—not so much as the dreams and shadows of this transient world?

But I hope there are not many such amongst you, and heartily wish there were none at all. Howsoever, give me leave to deal plainly with you. Do ye really believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, or do ye not? If you do not, what make you here, especially upon this day? Why are ye not rather at some Turkish mosque, or idol-temple, or else about your worldly business? What need you concern yourselves about the death of Christ, if ye do not believe that he died to save sinners? But, do ye really believe that he died to save sinners? Then he died to save you, who cannot but acknowledge yourselves to be sinners. And if so, what mean you, that ye mind not your salvation by him, more than all things in the world besides? Is it not the greatest, the only happiness you can ever attain to? Did the Son of God himself think it worth his while to lay down his own life to procure it for you, and can

you think it worth your while to lay down your lives in the pursuit of it? Certainly you cannot think so. But why then is it that you do not do it?

Especially, considering that how great an happiness soever it be, there is not a soul here present but may attain it, if you will but set yourselves in good earnest about it; Christ's blood being of that infinite value and virtue, that it can both expiate and cleanse you from all your sins; as many thousands have found already by their own experience, who once were miserable sinners upon earth, as you now are, but are now by Christ made glorified saints in heaven. And why may not you be made so as well as they? You have all the same Saviour as they had, and he is both as able and as willing to save you, as he was to save them. Inso-much, that if any of you perish, your blood will be upon your own heads. And not only yours, but his too; in that you neglect and trample upon it, and will not make use of it to the saving of your souls, for which he shed it.

But let others do what they please, and take what follows. Let us, who believe what we have now heard, even, that Jesus Christ being in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant, the nature of man; and in it was obedient to death, even the death of the cross, that he might save us from our sins, and make us happy;—let us, I say, who profess to believe this, endeavour to live accordingly, that we may lay hold on that eternal life, which the Son of God hath purchased for us at so dear a rate. For which purpose, let us apply ourselves to him in the sincere and constant use of

those means which he hath appointed for our obtaining salvation by him; such as praying and fasting, reading and hearing his holy word, and receiving his mystical body and blood, still trusting in him to assist and influence them so with his Holy Spirit, that they may be effectual to the ends for which he hath ordained them, even to the begetting and confirming our faith in him, and so to the mortifying our lusts, and to the quickening us with newness of life. Let us study his gospel, and whatsoever he hath there said, let us therefore believe it, because he who is truth itself hath said it; and whatsoever he there commands, let us therefore do it, because he hath commanded it, who coming into the world on purpose to save us, would be sure to command us nothing, but what is absolutely necessary for our salvation.

Wheresoever we are, let our eye be still upon him as always present with us, and interceding with his Father for us. 'Whatsoever we do, in word or deed,' let us 'do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,' trusting on him for his assistance of us in the doing it; and for God's acceptance of it when it is done. Let our minds be always running after him, and our faith so steadfastly fixed on him, that we may continually derive grace and virtue from him, to subdue our corruptions, to withstand temptations, to live above the world, and to walk in all the commandments of God blameless. Whatsoever our condition be in this life, let us still believe in him that died for us, to bless and sanctify it to the end for which he died, even to the salvation of our souls. Let us not despond or despair of God's mercy to us, nor of any thing that is, or can be good for us; 'for he that spared not his own Son,

but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not but with him also freely give us all things ?¹

Being thus prepared and qualified for it, let us put our whole trust and confidence in him, to pardon and absolve us from all our sins, to defend and protect us from whatsoever is really evil for us, to guide us into all truth, to confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, to direct, assist, and bless us through the whole course of our pilgrimage here below ; that when we depart out of this miserable and wicked world, we may go to him who hath done these great things for us, and enjoy that life which he hath purchased by his own death, even life with him, the eternal Son of God our Saviour, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory now and for ever. *Amen.*

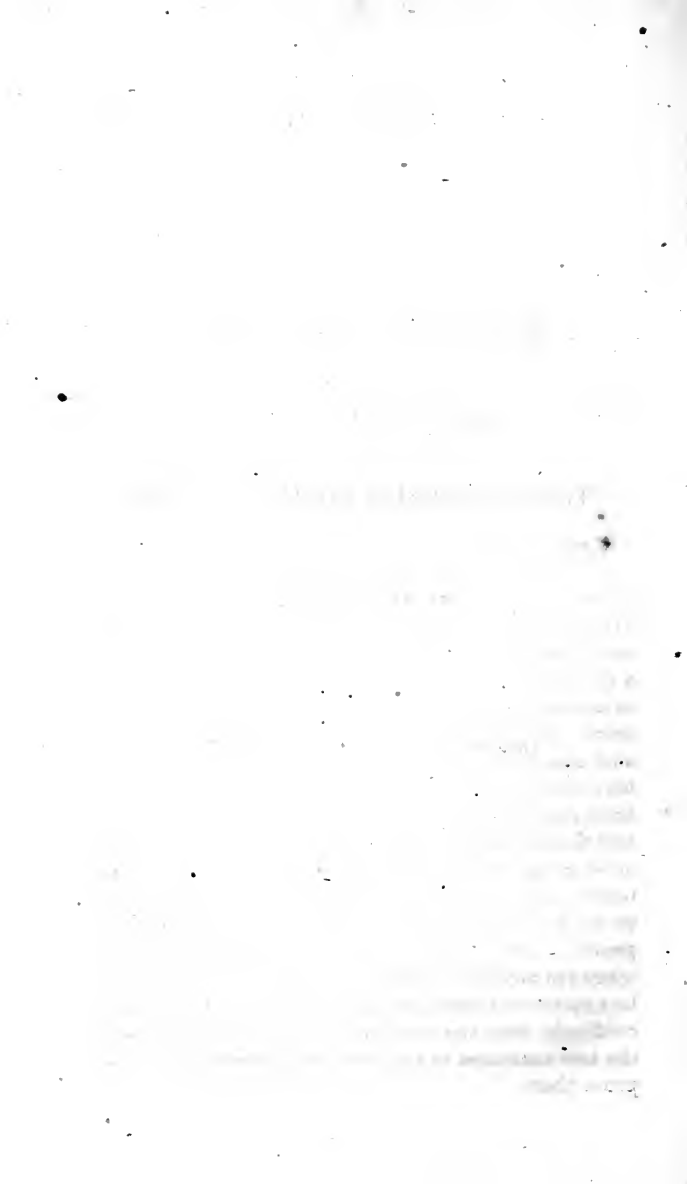
¹ Rom. viii. 32.

SERMON XIII.

**THE BELIEVER CRUCIFIED WITH
CHRIST.**

BY DR. WATTS.

[ISAAC WATTS was born in 1674, and died in 1749.]



S E R M O N X I I I .

GALATIANS II. 20.

I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live.

IT is a peculiar delight that our apostle takes in exalting the gospel of Christ above the law of works, and in raising the life and the privileges of a Christian, above the life of a heathen or a Jew, or above any other character or profession amongst men. He divests himself of all former characters, and abandons all other principles of life, that he may put on the Christian, and derive a better life from Jesus the Son of God, by faith in his name ; and this he does not only in his own person, but as sharing in the common principles of Christianity : this does not belong only to himself, but to all the saints of the Lord, as very clearly appears in other parts of this epistle, and also in other epistles that this apostle has written, though he expresses it here in his own name. I shall accordingly draw the two following propositions from the two sentences of my text, and endeavour to improve them

Prop. I. Every true Christian has communion with Christ in his death: 'I am crucified with Christ.'

Prop. II. Every believer lives a different life from what he himself has heretofore lived, or from what other persons are acquainted with: though 'I am crucified, yet I live.' I am dead to that life which I once lived in the flesh; and it is quite in another way and manner, and from other principles, that I now live, and act, and perform the several duties of my station.

I. Every true Christian has communion with Christ in his death, and may be said to be crucified with Christ; and that, in these four respects:—

1. Every true Christian is dead to the world by his interest in the death of Christ; dead to all the troubles, and to all the delights of this present state, as the apostle expresses it: 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.'¹ He and the world had nothing to do with each other; like two dead things, they had no influence upon one another. He was dead to the riches, and to the poverty of the world. Riches do not puff up the Christian, when he acts according to the principles of his new life, nor does poverty overwhelm or sink his spirits: he knows with the apostle, 'how to abound, and how to be abased,' and is still the same: he says to honours, and riches, and reproaches in the world, "What are these things to him who has learned to taste and value the praise of God, and the honour he expects among the holy angels?" He is so far dead to the relations and dearest com-

¹ Gal. vi. 14.

forts of life, that they do not draw him away from the consideration of his last end, nor from his close walking with God in the Redeemer: he knows them no more after the flesh; as the apostle speaks of the Jews, and of Jesus Christ himself as one of the Jews, 'Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.'¹ I have no respect for him as being of my nation and the seed of Israel, but as the common Saviour of mankind, and as such I live in and by him.

He is weaned from life itself: 'I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily';² that is, I put myself daily in a readiness to die; I set myself daily upon the borders of the grave; I expose myself in my thoughts beforehand unto death; I am ready to pass that important hour whenever my Redeemer appoints me; I am ready to lie as one that has quitted all pretences to this life, and is ready to part with all the possessions of it; and this through the influence of the death of Christ. The death of Christ has been the price or purchase of this grace that mortifies a Christian thus to the world; he has bought the influence of the divine Spirit of the Father, by which influence a Christian becomes a new creature, and is mortified to every thing that before had power over him.

Christ's death is also the pattern of a believer's crucifixion to the world. Our Lord Jesus Christ, young as he was, in the full vigour of life, and in a capacity for the enjoyment of all the delights of sense, left the world. The death of Christ speaks

¹ 2 Cor. v. 16.

² 1 Cor. xv. 31.

this in the ear and heart of every believer, "The world is not worth living in." The death of Christ, and his abandoning the world so soon, have poured abundance of contempt upon the manner of living in this world. The life of Christ in the world, in poverty, in the form of a servant, has poured scorn upon all the grandeur, riches, and honours of it. The King of heaven, when he dwelt here upon earth, did not think them worth taking. The manner of his death and burial has poured contempt upon every thing that is magnificent in death; upon all the pomp of funerals, and the honours of the grave. He hung upon the cross, and submitted to death in the most dishonourable way, by dying like a malefactor or a slave; his body was begged and conveyed away to a private sepulchre in a garden, though he might have had the attendance of mourning angels, and all the show of heaven waiting at his funeral. All this was appointed to humble the pride of man, to make us see that there is nothing in all the vanities of life desirable. Our head has despised them all.

2. A believer is not only dead to this world, but he is dead in an especial manner to sin, by the death of Christ. Sin is mortified in him by the crucifixion of his Lord; sin received its death-wound upon the cross of our Redeemer. The apostle speaks of this at large in his epistle to the Romans: 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him;' that is, the principle of sin within us, the corrupt nature that we brought into the world with us; 'that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto

sin. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.'¹ Did Jesus Christ undergo a painful and shameful death, that sin might die, and shall a Christian revive it? Did our Lord Jesus Christ nail sin to his cross, and shall we subdue ourselves to the power of it, when our Lord has subdued its power? Sinful pleasures can have no allurements to a Christian, for they are all nailed to the cross of Christ.

The death of Christ has slain sin, and the Christian will not suffer an enemy so conquered and so trampled upon to overcome him. This is the language of the Christian life, this is the spirit and the temper of the Christian nature; but too often the believer sinks beneath it.

3. A believer is dead to the law of works, by the death of Christ; he is free from the rigour and curses of the law, by his union to Christ in his death: 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.'²

A believer is dead to the law as a covenant of works, and the law is dead to him; for, considered as such, it can neither hurt nor help him, nor does he either fear or hope for any thing from it. Christ, our surety and our representative, was crucified, sustained the accursed death, and thereby fulfilled the law, so that it has no more to say to Christ; and if we are one with him, it has no more to say to us, it cannot condemn us. The apostle, in his epistle to the Romans, not only shows that it cannot condemn us, but he shows that it has not power in us or over us, to irritate and provoke sin as formerly it had: 'Wherefore, my brethren, ye

¹ Rom. vi. 6, 7 11, 12.

² Gal. iii. 13.

also are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ.—When we were in the flesh, the motions of sin that were by the law,' that is, that took occasion to rise up in opposition to the commands of God, and the law of God, 'did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law; that being dead wherein we were held;' that is, the covenant of works being dead, being finished by our Lord Jesus Christ, our great representative that suffered for us, we may now 'serve him in newness of spirit,' under the principles of a divine life, and not 'in the oldness of the letter,'¹ by the constraint and terrors of the law, as I shall afterwards show you.

4. A believer is dead to the Jewish dispensation of the gospel, and to all yokes and tokens of bondage, by the death of Christ. For the Jews had the gospel preached to them as well as we, but under darkness, and clouds, and figures, and many ceremonies, whereby the glory of it was obscured, and the liberty, and beauty, and light of it were mingled with much bondage and terror; but our Lord Jesus has cancelled all these forms of things by his death, and has freed believers from them: 'wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ,' says the apostle, 'from the rudiments of the world,' by which he has a peculiar regard to the Jewish ceremonies; why, as though living in the world, 'are ye subject to ordinances now? for our Lord Jesus Christ 'blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, that was contrary to us,' that showed us our guilt, and did not give us effectual relief; he took it out of the way, 'nailing it to his cross;—which was but a

¹ Rom. vii. 4, 5, 6.

shadow of things to come:'¹ but our Lord Jesus has removed the shadow. The believer, by his communion with Christ, is dead to the ceremonies of God's own invention, and by the death of Christ he is released from all that bondage; he will not, therefore, make yokes of his own to cast upon his own neck, nor will he impose new yokes upon the necks of his brethren. The bondage and yokes are all broken, and the chains and slavery are all abolished by the death of Christ. He stands fast 'in the liberty wherewith' the death of Christ 'has made him free.'

Thus have I shown you very briefly in what sense a believer is crucified together with Christ; he is dead to the world, he is dead to sin, he is dead to the law, he is dead to all the yokes of bondage and ceremonious worship; and all this in and by a dying Saviour, his union to him, and communion with him.

II. The second proposition that I mentioned is this; the believer lives a very different life from what he did before faith: 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.'

Hence it plainly appears, that it is not the same sort of life he lived before, for a death is passed upon that; he has lost a sort of life, but he has not lost all manner of life, for he lives still. To show what difference there is betwixt the life of a Christian before and after his faith or interest in Christ, I shall do little more than go over the same heads again which you have already heard; I shall only apply them in a positive way to the life of a Christian, as before I showed you wherein a Christian has parted with them, and is dead to them.

¹ Col. ii. 14, &c.

1. The believer before lived a life of the world, exercised on visible things, but now he lives upon things spiritual and invisible; for he is dead to the world and alive to heaven. His sorrows now are of another kind, they are laid out upon sin; whereas before they were laid out only upon the uneasiness and disappointments he met with in the world. His joys before arose from sensible things and the comforts of this life, but now his joy abounds from his interest in Jesus Christ, beyond all the joys he once experienced in the pleasures of the world. Before, he hoped for some advancing circumstances in the world; but now he hopes for advancement in heaven, for glory amongst the angels, and a place amongst the best of God's creation. His desires once were, "Oh that I might enjoy the satisfaction and delight, the pleasure and advancement of this world!" but now, his soul being mortified to them, breathes after the presence of God, longs for spiritual entertainments, and has a perpetual tendency towards the enjoyments of heaven. His life is now divine and heavenly; whilst he uses the things of this world, he despises them and lives above them. Whilst he manages the affairs and business of his secular calling, and the concerns of this present state, his heart is at every turn putting on her divine wings and rising heavenward, and endeavouring to get above those very affairs which now and then his thoughts are too much entangled with, and in which it is necessary that they should be sometimes engaged whilst he is in this world; but he is ever afraid that they should cleave too closely to him, he is ever afraid of the chain and bondage. For having tasted the pleasures of a divine release, he would not willingly be

clogged and fettered again. He uses the world therefore with the utmost caution, lest it should ensnare him, and draw him away again from his highest hope and his best beloved joy.

2. Before, the believer's life was a life of sin, in common with the rest of mankind, the children of sinful Adam; but now it is a life of holiness, for he is dead to sin and alive to God. This, in the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, the apostle makes appear at large; he says, that we are not only crucified with Christ, but we are risen with him too; and as our Lord Jesus Christ being once dead and risen again by the power of God, lives to God for ever, so we being dead to sin, must henceforth and for ever live to that God who hath raised Jesus from the dead: before, we were dead in trespasses and sins, but now 'you who were once dead hath he quickened,' that you should no more be the children of disobedience, no more serve 'the lusts of the flesh and of the mind,' and walk like the children of the world, as others do; but as the children of life, as the children of grace, as heirs of everlasting glory in that heaven, where nothing shall enter that defiles.

'The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' were the springs and principles of his motions and actions before; but now the love of God is a powerful and divine principle. Then his meat and drink was to fulfil some sinful desire; now to do the will of his Father which is in heaven. Before, he had much rather sin than suffer; now he had much rather suffer than sin. Hearing, reading, conversing of vanity, and the scandals and reproaches that were cast upon Christians, might be once his pleasure, whilst the things of God were his aversion, and devotion was accounted by him

dull business, and a tiresome hour; but, "Now," says he, "'I will go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.'¹ Religion is now my delight, for that world where God is for ever worshipped is my highest hope and my everlasting prospect."

3. The believer's life before was influenced by the law or covenant of works, but now it is influenced by the gospel or covenant of grace; and there is a vast difference between his present and former principles. The spring of actions and duties arose formerly from the threatenings of the law, but now they arise from the promises, from the hopes, from the comforts of the gospel. The expectation of man, in a carnal state, is the expectation of eternal happiness, arising from the covenant of works, from his own righteousness; but now from the righteousness of the Son of God, and from the free and abounding promises of the covenant of grace. He is not now urged to duty by the terrors of the law, so much as by the sweet allurements of the gospel; therefore in that text which I have just cited, this sense is very evident, that now being dead to the law, 'we should serve God in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter';² not from the hurries and vexation of conscience, that come upon it from the commanding and threatening law of God, as a covenant of works, but by the sweeter and kinder motives of the gospel of the grace of God, 'that, bringing salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;'³ and behold now one of the new principles of it, 'looking for

¹ Psalm xliii. 4.

² Rom. vii. 6.

that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.'¹

What manner of person should I be then, 'in all holy conversation and godliness,' who look for a dissolving earth and heavens, and a returning Saviour to take me to dwell for ever with him. My Lord Jesus Christ has died for me, therefore I must live to him. Once I expected strength from the commands and threatenings of the law, as well as righteousness from my performance of it; but now I find it is in vain to expect righteousness or strength there; and I have another righteousness, and I have a better strength, for 'the Lord Jehovah is my strength, and my righteousness.' How many are there, when first awakened, that run from one preacher to another, to hear sermons of mere duty and terror, expecting that these should lash their consciences into holiness, and that the thunders of the threatening law should strike their hearts and melt them! but they wander from place to place in vain. They hear the law, and it terrifies, they hear the duty of it, and it awakens them. It shows them their guilt, for 'by the law is the knowledge of sin;' but they are still the same persons, dead in sin, still bound in the chains of corrupt nature. The grace of the gospel alone can soften the heart, can break these bonds, can release from the fetters of sin, and make of a stubborn, and unwilling, and disobedient wretch, a cheerful, and joyful, and obedient Christian. They come to the blood of Christ, and they find softening virtue for their hearts, and 'the love of Christ constrains them,' and they can-

¹ Titus, ii. 11, 12, 13.

not help living to him, because they hope for eternal life from him. They put all their immortal concerns into the hands of Jesus Christ, and they have put their hard hearts there too, that they may be softened. They have put also their stubborn and disobedient wills there, that they may be dissolved. They have put their guilty and sinful souls there, that they may be justified by the righteousness of another, that they may be strong in the grace of another, that they may be renewed by the regenerating Spirit of Jesus Christ. They are come into that faith that 'worketh by love,' which is the only thing that avails in the gospel.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, having given up the soul to him, believes that Jesus receives it. Hence there arises a divine light from this hope, which enables the soul cheerfully to fulfil all the hard duties of a Christian life. The believer has the spirit of a slave no longer, but the spirit of a son by adoption; and he finds, that the sweet doctrines of the grace and promises of the gospel have continually more influence upon him, than all the curses and terrors of the law, and all the flashes and fire of the word of hell ever had before.

4. A believer before lived in the forms and outward observances of external religion. He called this religion, and built his hopes upon it; but now his devotion is more inward and spiritual. Not but he always maintains these forms and these observances, which the light of nature, which the word of God, which the particular institutions of the gospel, teach and require of him; but it is the inward part of religion that his soul most aims at, and his eye is most watchful over. A carnal man may take up with forms, and thereby satisfy natu-

ral conscience; so the Jews did under a spirit of bondage, and the Jewish Christians were ready to run into it. They had much ado to be brought off from those ways of living. Carnal Christians also, loose professors, that think going to church, reading a chapter, and saying their prayers will bring them to heaven, all live this sort of life. But the design of a Christian is to see God, and to be with Jesus Christ in all his worship. He is not easy unless he can find God in ordinances. He is not satisfied with the shell and empty shadow, unless he can have the substance too, the pearl of great price that his soul looks after.

It is with God that he converses in prayer, and thinks a few minutes upon his knees in prayer nothing if he cannot get near to his God there, if he does not feel his soul to have inward strivings to come near to his God. The presence or absence of God in worship are things that he concerns himself about now; whereas heretofore, if he did but attend to the external forms of worship, he did not understand much the meaning of a present or absent God in them.

These, then, are some of the differences betwixt the life of a Christian before faith, and his life after faith. Before, it was a life of sense, exercised on sensible things, but now he lives upon things spiritual and invisible. Before, it was a life of sin, now it is a life of holiness. Before, it was a life influenced by the law and covenant of works, now by the principles of the covenant of grace. Before, he counted forms and outward observances, religion, and sufficient to salvation; but now he looks at inward and spiritual things.

Four words of use shall conclude this discourse.

1. Let every soul in this assembly know, then, that if they do not live a very different life from that which they brought into the world with them, they are not Christians. For by nature we live a life of the world, we live upon this world, we live to sin and vanity; by nature we derive our righteousness and our strength from the law, at least we attempt it, though religion is always insufficient and ineffectual, when we make it consist too much in outward forms and external observances. This is the natural life of man; for the gospel is not born with us, the gospel comes by the teaching of the word, under the influence of the blessed Spirit. The gospel comes into our hearts this way, and moulds, and changes, and renews our nature, and gives us new principles, and brings us into a new world. 'Except a man be born again,' says Christ to Nicodemus, 'he cannot see the kingdom of God.'¹ You cannot enter into the kingdom of God, you cannot come into a state of grace in this world, nor into a state of glory in the world to come, unless there is such a change passed upon you as I have now described. Let this then be matter of your serious examination: "Am I such a creature as I was when I came into this world? has any great change passed upon me? are my principles of action new? are my passions of hope, fear, joy, and desire new, or are they the same that ever they were?" 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.'²

¹ John, iii. 3.

² 2 Cor. v. 17.

2. What a shame is it that those who profess a life so excellent and so different from the world, should act and live as though they belonged unto it, as though they were one with it! What a shame is it that they should be conformed to it in every thing, and be uneasy if they cannot attain that conformity! They know not how to cross the way of the world, they have not courage to oppose the world, and they are content to swim with the stream. But this conduct is contrary to the very principles of Christianity, and where it is much indulged, it will darken, obscure, and deface all the glory of their profession; and they had need take great care that their conversion be right and true, for otherwise they will have much reason to fear that they were mistaken at first in their hopes, and that they are still the children of wrath. I say, where too much of the principles of this old life, which was cut off, grows strong again, they had need take care that their conversion be real, lest at last they be mistaken in things of infinite importance. The divine life must sometimes show itself, it cannot be always hid. Paul 'preached the faith that once he destroyed,' and he destroyed the corruptions that once he promoted. Behold the man is a new creature; behold Saul the persecutor prayeth. Let it be said concerning every one of us, "Behold, he is a new creature!" that the world may observe that we are born of God.

3. If this be as I have described, then every true Christian is nearer to heaven than we generally imagine. He is dead with Christ, he is risen again, and is alive with Christ. And when he enters into heaven, he does but receive the perfection of that life which is here begun. He is risen

already in his representative, and with his representative and head he is entered into heaven. 'God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.'¹ Under this consideration it is, that we being dead to our former life and the life of this world, being brought into a new and divine life, are, as the apostle tells us, 'come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.'² These are the words I chiefly aim at, 'the spirits of just men made perfect.' Ye belong to the same society that the spirits of just men belong to, though ye are not released from the bonds of the flesh. Ye are one with them, in Jesus Christ your head. Ye belong to the same state, ye are made denizens of the same heavenly city, though ye are not yet entered within the gates of it, but abide your Father's pleasure in a foreign country. Ye belong to the state above, ye are one with the spirits of the glorified just; and the life ye will live in glory, is but the same kind of life ye live in grace, though in a far more exalted degree. Ye are changed from death to life, from sin to grace; but the step ye

¹ Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6, 7.

Heb. xii. 22, 23.

will make from grace to glory will not be a change, but an advancement in the same life.

4. Lastly; I would say this also, that an attendance on the Lord's supper is the proper season to awaken our meditations to communion with a dying Saviour. We eat the bread and drink the wine, and thereby represent our union with a crucified and dying Christ. The bread and wine which are incorporated with our natural bodies, made one with us by our eating, represent the union of our spirits to our Lord Jesus Christ, and our becoming one with him. Now if at these seasons, and at these ordinances, we are represented as dying together with Christ, let us remember what manner of persons we ought to be, what sort of profession we make. We sit there and tell the world, we are dead to sin, we are dead to things sensible, we are dead to the law, we are dead to ceremonies and carnal ordinances, we are dead to every thing which before we were alive unto; we make a profession of this before God, angels, and men. O may our characters and our conversation correspond with such a communion with a living and dying Saviour!



SERMON XIV.

OUR LORD'S DESCENT INTO HELL.

BY BISHOP HORSLEY.

SAMUEL HORSLEY was born in 1733. He was made Bishop of St. David's in 1788; was translated to St. Asaph in 1802; and died in 1806.]

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S E R M O N X I V .

I PETER, III. 18—20.

Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.

IN the first rudiments of our Christian faith, comprised in the apostles' creed, which we are made to get by heart in our earliest infancy, we are taught to believe that "our Lord Jesus Christ descended into hell;" and this belief is solemnly professed by every member of the congregation, when that creed is repeated in the daily service of the church. And it seemed of so much importance that it should be distinctly acknowledged by the Church of England when we separated from the Roman communion, that our reformers thought proper to make it by itself the subject of one of the articles of religion. They were aware, that upon the fact of our Lord's descent into hell the church of Rome pretended to build her doctrine of purgatory, which they justly esteemed one of her worst corruptions;

but, apprehensive that the zeal of reformation might in this, as in some other instances, carry men too far, and induce them to reject a most important truth, on which a dangerous error had been once ingrafted, to prevent this intemperance of reform, they assert, in the third article of the thirty-nine, "That as Christ died for us and was buried, so it is to be believed that he went down into hell." The terms in which they state the proposition, imply that Christ's going down into hell is a matter of no less importance to be believed, than that he died upon the cross for men—is no less a plain matter of fact in the history of our Lord's life and death, than the burial of his dead body. It should seem, that what is thus taught among the first things which children learn, should be among the plainest,—that what is thus laid down as a matter of the same necessity to be believed as our Lord's passion and atonement, should be among the least disputed,—that what every Christian is required to acknowledge as his own belief, in the daily assemblies of the faithful, should little need either explanation or proof to any that have been instructed in the very first principles only of the doctrine of Christ. But so it is, that what the sagacity of our reformers foresaw, the precaution which they used has not prevented. The truth itself has been brought into discredit by the errors with which it has been adulterated; and such has been the industry of modern refinement, and unfortunately so great has been its success, that doubts have been raised about the sense of this plain article of our creed by some, and by others, about the truth and authenticity of it. It will, therefore, be no unprofitable undertaking to show that the assertion in

the apostles' creed, that "our Lord descended into hell," is to be taken as a plain matter of fact in the literal meaning of the words; to show what proof of this fact we have in holy writ; and, lastly, to show the great use and importance of the fact as a point of Christian doctrine.

First, then, for the sense of the proposition, "He descended into hell." If we consider the words as they stand in the creed itself, and in connexion with what immediately precedes and follows them, they appear evidently to contain a declaration of something which our Lord performed—some going of our Lord to a place called "hell," in the interval of time between the burial of his dead body and his rising to life again on the third day after that interment; for thus speaks the creed of Jesus Christ: "was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead." It is evident that the descending into hell is spoken of as an action of our Lord, but as an action performed by him after he was dead and buried, and before he rose again. In the body, our dead Lord, more than any other dead man, could perform no action; for the very notion of death is, that all sensation and activity, and power of motion of the body, is in that state of the man extinguished. This, therefore, was an act of that part of the man which continues active after death,—that is, of the soul separated by death from the body,—as the interment must be understood of the body apart from the soul. The dead body could no more go into hell than the living soul could be laid in the grave. Considering the words, therefore, as they stand in the creed, as the church now receives it, they seem as little capable

of any variety of meaning, and almost as little to require explanation, as the word "buried." That word describes not more plainly, to the apprehensions of all men, what was done with the inanimate body of our crucified Lord, than these words declare what was done by his rational soul in its intermediate state. The only question that can possibly arise to a plain man's understanding is, where or what the place may be which is here called hell, to which it is said our Lord in the state of death descended.

It is evident that this must be some place below the surface of the earth; for it is said that he "descended," that is, he went down to it. Our Lord's death took place upon the surface of the earth, where the human race inhabit; that, therefore, and none higher, is the place from which he descended: of consequence, the place to which he went by descent was below it; and it is with relation to these parts below the surface that his rising to life on the third day must be understood. This was only a return from the nether regions to the realms of life and day, from which he had descended; not his ascension into heaven, which was a subsequent event, and makes a distinct article in the creed.

But although the hell to which our Lord descended was indeed below, as the word "descent" implies, it is by no means to be understood of the place of torment. This is a point which requires elucidation, to prevent a mistake into which the unlearned easily might fall. The word "hell" is so often applied in common speech, and in the English translation of the New Testament, to the place of torment, that the genuine meaning of the word (in which, however, it is used in many passages of

the English Bible) is almost forgotten; and the common people never hear of hell but their thoughts are carried to that dismal place, 'where the fallen angels are kept in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.' But the word, in its natural import, signifies only that invisible place which is the appointed habitation of departed souls in the interval between death and the general resurrection. That such a place must be, is indisputable; for when man dieth, his soul dieth not, but returneth unto him that gave it, to be disposed of at his will and pleasure; which is clearly implied in that admonition of our Saviour, 'Fear not them which kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.' But the soul existing after death, and separated from the body, though of a nature immaterial, must be in some place: for, however metaphysicians may talk of place as one of the adjuncts of body, as if nothing but gross sensible body could be limited to a place, to exist without relation to place seems to be one of the incommunicable perfections of the Divine Being; and it is hardly to be conceived that any created spirit, of however high an order, can be without locality, or without such determination of its existence at any given time to some certain place, that it shall be true to say of it, "Here it is, and not elsewhere." That such at least is the condition of the human soul, were it seasonable to go into so abstruse a disquisition, might be proved, I think, indisputably from holy writ. Assuming, therefore, that every departed soul has its place of residence, it would be reasonable to suppose, if revelation were silent on the subject, that a common mansion is provided for them all, their nature be-

ing similar; since we see throughout all nature creatures of the same sort placed together in the same element. But revelation is not silent. The sacred writers of the Old Testament speak of such a common mansion in the inner parts of the earth; and we find the same opinion so general among the heathen writers of antiquity, that it is more probable that it had its rise in the earliest patriarchal revelations than in the imaginations of man, or in poetical fiction. The notion is confirmed by the language of the writers of the New Testament, with this additional circumstance, that they divide this central mansion of the dead into two distinct regions, for the separate lodging of the souls of the righteous and the reprobate. In this, too, they have the concurrence of the earliest heathen poets, who placed the good and the bad in separate divisions of the central region. The name which the Hebrew writers gave to this mansion of departed souls, (without regard to any such division,) expresses only that it is a place unknown, about which all are curious and inquisitive. The writers of the New Testament adopted the name which the earliest Greek writers had given it, which describes it by the single property of invisibility. But for the place of torment by itself, they had quite another appellation. The English word "hell," in its primary and natural meaning, signifies nothing more than "the unseen and covered place;" and is properly used, both in the Old and the New Testament, to render the Hebrew word in the one, and the Greek word in the other, which denote the invisible mansion of disembodied souls, without any reference to suffering. But being used also in the translation of the New Testament for that other

word which properly denotes the place of torment, the good sense of the word, if we may so call it, is unfortunately forgotten, and the common people know of no other hell but that of the burning lake.

This certainly was *not* the hell to which the soul of Christ descended. He descended to hell properly so called,—to the invisible mansion of departed spirits, and to that part of it where the souls of the faithful, when they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity.

That he should go to this place was a necessary branch of the general scheme and project of redemption, which required that the Divine Word should take our nature upon him, and fulfil the entire condition of humanity in every period and stage of man's existence, from the commencement of life, in the mother's womb, to the extinction and the renovation of it. The same wonderful scheme of humiliation which required that the Son should be conceived, and born, and put to death, made it equally necessary that his soul, in its intermediate state, should be gathered to the souls of the departed saints.

That the invisible place of their residence is the hell to which our Lord descended, is evident from the terms of his own promise to the repentant thief upon the cross: 'Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' Paradise was certainly some place where our Lord was to be on the very day on which he suffered, and where the companion of his sufferings was to be with him. It was not heaven; for to heaven our Lord after his death ascended not till after his resurrection, as appears from his own words to Mary Magdalen.

He was not therefore in heaven on the day of the crucifixion; and where he was not, the thief could not be with him. It was no place of torment; for to any such place the name of paradise never was applied. It could be no other than that region of repose and rest where the souls of the righteous abide in joyful hope of the consummation of their bliss. And upon this single text we might safely rest the proof of this article of our creed in the sense in which we explain it,—a sense so plain and prominent, in the bare words, to every one who is not misled by the popular misapplication of the word “hell,” that it never would have been set aside to make room for expositions of more refinement, much less would the authenticity of the article ever even have been questioned, but for the countenance which it was supposed to give to the doctrine of purgatory as taught in the church of Rome; with which, however, it has not even a remote connexion. Time will not permit me to enter into a particular examination of the different interpretations of this article which have been attempted by those who have not gone the length of proposing to expunge it from the creed, because they were well aware, that although it is not to be found in any copy of the creed now extant, of an earlier date than the latter end of the fourth century, yet that Christ, in some sense or other, descended into hell was the unanimous belief of the Christian church from the earliest ages. I will offer only this general observation,—that the interpretation which I have given is the only literal interpretation which the words will bear, unless we would admit the extravagant assertion, as to me it seems, of the venerable Calvin, that our blessed Lord ac-

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tually went down to the place of torment, and there sustained (horrible to think or mention!) the pains of a reprobate soul in punishment; a notion evidently confuted by our Lord's own description of the place, where the companion of his sufferings on the cross was to be with him on the very day of the crucifixion.

This sense being thus confuted, I say the personal descent of our Lord to that region where the souls of the righteous rest in hope, is the only literal interpretation which the words of the article will bear, and that any figurative interpretation of the words of a creed or formulary of faith are inadmissible; for, in such a composition, intended to convey the knowledge of the most important truths to the most ordinary understandings, the ornamental figures of rhetoric or poetry, would be no less out of place than in the opinion of a judge upon a question of law, or in a mathematical demonstration. They could have no other effect than to introduce doubt, where every thing ought to be precise and unequivocal. Without entering, therefore, into a particular confutation of the figurative interpretations that have been offered of this article of the creed, I shall proceed at once to show what proof we find in Scripture of the fact averred, according to the literal meaning of the words, that "Christ descended into hell."

This proof rests, I think, principally upon three texts of Scripture, in addition to that which I have already mentioned, as affording by itself ample confirmation of the truth of the proposition, namely, our Lord's promise to the penitent thief upon the cross. But there are three other texts which conspire with this, to put the matter out of doubt.

The first is that text of the Psalmist which was alleged by St. Peter, in his first sermon on the day of Pentecost, as a prophecy concerning Christ, verified in his resurrection from the dead : 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.' The apostle having recited these words of the Psalmist, says they were not spoken by David of himself, but that David, being a prophet, spake of the resurrection of Christ,—that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption. From this text, if there were no other, the article, in the sense in which we have explained it, is clearly and infallibly deduced ; for if the soul of Christ were not left in hell at his resurrection, then it was in hell *before* his resurrection. But it was not there either before his death or after his resurrection, for that never was imagined : therefore it descended into hell after his death, and before his resurrection : for as his flesh, by virtue of the divine promise, saw no corruption, although it was in the grave, the place of corruption, where it remained until his resurrection ; so his soul, which by virtue of the like promise was not left in hell, was *in* that hell where it was not *left*, until the time came for its reunion to the body, for the accomplishment of the resurrection. Hence it is so clearly evinced that the soul of Christ was in the place called hell, "that none but an infidel," saith St. Augustine, "can deny it."

Another text, which carries us to the same conclusion, is in the fourth chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, in the apostle's reasoning upon a passage of the sixty-eighth Psalm, which he applies as prophetic of the various gifts which Christ, after

his ascension, conferred upon the members of his church. The Psalmist speaks to this effect, as he is cited by the apostle: 'When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men?' 'Now that he ascended,' says the apostle, arguing upon the Psalmists words, 'what is it but that he descended first into the lower parts of the earth?' intimating, that the ascending up on high, of which the Psalmist speaks, is to be understood in reference to a previous descent into the lowest regions as its opposite.

Some, however, have imagined, that the descent into hell is not to be deduced from this text with the same certainty as from the former. They imagine something of ambiguity in the phrase of 'the lower parts of the earth.' Rightly referring the ascending up on high to our Lord's ascension into heaven, they think that 'the lower parts of the earth' may signify the earth generally, as lower than the heavens, and even nothing lower than the very surface of it. And it must be confessed that our Lord speaks of himself before his death, while he was living upon the surface of the earth, as having come down to it from heaven. Nevertheless, 'the lower parts of the earth,' in the Greek language, in which the apostle writes, is a periphrasis for "hell," in the proper sense of that word, as the invisible mansion of departed spirits. The phrase is so perfectly equivalent to the word "hell," that we find it used instead of that word in some of the Greek copies of the creed, in this very article, where the mention of our Lord's coming down from heaven to dwell upon the earth would be quite out of place, after the mention of the several events of his birth, cruci-

fixion, death, and burial, in their natural order and succession. But, indeed, this phrase of the 'lower parts of the earth,' is in the Greek language so much a name for the central parts of the globe, as distinguished from the surface or the outside on which we live, that had the apostle intended by this phrase to denote the inhabited surface of the earth, as lower than the heavens, we may confidently say, his Greek converts at Ephesus would not easily have guessed his meaning. This text, therefore, when the Greek words are taken in the only sense in which any writer in that language would have used, or any one who spoke the language would have understood them, expressly affirms a descent of Christ's spirit into hell.

A third scripture which goes to the proof of the same fact, is that very remarkable passage in the third chapter of St. Peter's first Epistle, which I have chosen for my text. I might mention, as a fourth, another passage in the following chapter of the same epistle, which alludes to the same event; but not, I think, with equal certainty; for the sense of that following passage is indeed dependent upon this, insomuch that any figurative interpretation which would invalidate the argument we shall deduce from this first passage, would, in an equal degree, affect the second; and no proof can be drawn from that of Christ's descent into hell, if none can be previously found in the words of my text.

But in them, taken in their most literal and obvious meaning, we find not only a distinct assertion of the fact, that "Christ descended into hell," in his disembodied spirit; but moreover, a declaration

of the business upon which he went thither, or in which at least his soul was employed while it was there. 'Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which some time were disobedient.' The interpretation of this whole passage turns upon the expression, 'spirits in prison;' the sense of which I shall first, therefore, endeavour to ascertain, as the key to the meaning of the whole. It is hardly necessary to mention, that 'spirits' here can signify no other spirits than the souls of men; for we read not of any preaching of Christ to any other race of beings than mankind. The apostle's assertion, therefore, is this, that Christ went and preached to souls of men in prison. The invisible mansion of departed spirits, though certainly not a place of penal confinement to the good, is nevertheless in some respects a prison. It is a place of seclusion from the external world—a place of unfinished happiness, consisting in rest, security, and hope, more than enjoyment. It is a place which the souls of men never would have entered, had not sin introduced death, and from which there is no exit by any natural means for those who once have entered. The deliverance of the saints from it is to be effected by our Lord's power. It is described in the old Latin language as a place enclosed within an impassible fence; and in the poetical parts of Scripture it is represented as secured by gates of brass, which our Lord is to batter down, and barricadoed with huge massive iron bars, which he is to cut in sunder. As a place of confinement, therefore, though not of punishment, it may well be called a prison. The original word, however, in this text of the apostle

imports not of necessity so much as this, but merely a place of safe keeping ; for so this passage might be rendered with great exactness. 'He went and preached to the spirits in safe keeping.' And the invisible mansion of departed souls is to the righteous a place of safe keeping, where they are preserved under the shadow of God's right hand, as their condition sometimes is described in Scripture, till the season shall arrive for their advancement to their future glory ; as the souls of the wicked, on the other hand, are reserved in the other division of the same place, unto the judgment of the great day. Now, if Christ went and preached to souls of men thus in prison or in safe keeping, surely he went to the prison of those souls, or to the place of their custody ; and what place that should be but the hell of the apostles' creed, to which our Lord descended, I have not yet met with the critic that could explain. So clearly does this text affirm the fact of Christ's descent into hell.

But this is not all. It agrees with the apostles' creed in the time of this event, that it was in the interval between our Lord's death and resurrection ; for the apostle affirms, that it was in his spirit, that is, in his disembodied soul, that Christ went and preached to those souls in safe custody. 'Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.' 'Quickened by the Spirit.'—The Spirit in these English words, seems to be put, not for the soul of Christ, but for the Divine Spirit ; and the sense seems to be, that Christ, after he was put to death, was raised to life again by the Holy Spirit. But this, though it be the sense of the English translation, and a true proposition, is certainly not the sense of the apostle's words. It is

of great importance to remark, though it may seem a grammatical nicety, that the prepositions in either branch of this clause, have been supplied by the translators, and are not in the original. The words 'flesh' and 'spirit,' in the original, stand without any preposition, in that case which, in the Greek language, without any preposition, is the case either of the cause or instrument by which—of the time when—of the place where—of the part in which—of the manner how—or of the respects in which, according to the exigence of the context; and, to any one who will consider the original with critical accuracy, it will be obvious, from the perfect antithesis of these two clauses concerning flesh and spirit, that if the word 'spirit' denote the active cause by which Christ was restored to life, which must be supposed by them who understand the word of the Holy Ghost, the word 'flesh' must equally denote the active cause by which he was put to death, which therefore must have been the flesh of his own body; an interpretation too manifestly absurd to be admitted. But if the word 'flesh' denote, as it most evidently does, the part in which death took effect upon him, 'spirit' must denote the part in which life was preserved in him, that is, his own soul; and the word 'quickened' is often applied to signify, not the resuscitation of life extinguished, but the preservation and continuance of life subsisting. The exact rendering, therefore, of the apostle's words would be, 'Being put to death in the flesh, but quick in the spirit:' that is, surviving in his soul the stroke of death which his body had sustained; 'by which,' or rather 'in which,' that is, in which surviving

soul, 'he went and preached to the souls of men in prison,' or 'in safe keeping.'

It is not to be wondered that this text should have been long considered in the church as one of the principal foundations of the Catholic belief of Christ's descent into hell: it is rather to be wondered that so clear a proof should ever have been abandoned. In the articles of religion agreed upon in convocation in the year 1552, the 6th Edward the Sixth, and published by the king's authority the following year, the third article is in these words: "As Christ died and was buried for us, so also it is to be believed that he went down into hell; for the body lay in the sepulchre until the resurrection, but his ghost departing from him, was with the ghosts that were in prison, or in hell, as the place of St. Peter doth testify." But in the short interval of ten years, between this convocation, in the reign of Edward, and the setting forth of the thirty-nine articles in their present form, in the 5th of queen Elizabeth, a change seems to have taken place in the opinions of the divines of our church with respect to this text of St. Peter; for in the articles, as they were then drawn, and we now have them, Christ's descent into hell is still asserted, but the proof of it from the text of St. Peter is withdrawn;—as if the literal sense of the text which affords the proof had fallen under suspicion, and some other exposition of it had been adopted. This change of opinion, I fear, is to be ascribed to an undue reliance of the divines of that time on the authority of St. Austin; for St. Austin was, I think, the first who doubted of the literal sense of this passage of St. Peter. He perplexes himself with some

questions, which seemed to him to arise out of it, of too great subtlety perhaps to be solved by man; and then he had recourse to the usual but dangerous expedient of abandoning the plain meaning of the passage, for some loose, figurative interpretation, which presents a proposition of no sort of difficulty to the understanding of the critic, because in truth it is a proposition of his own making. I mean not to depreciate the character of St. Austin. He was indeed in his day, a burning and a shining light; and he has been ever since, by his writings, one of the brightest luminaries of the Latin church;—a man of warm, unaffected piety, of the greatest natural talents and the highest attainments, exercised in the assiduous study of the holy Scriptures, replete with sacred learning, and withal deeply versed in that Pagan lore, in which, however it may have been of late shamefully calumniated, the soundest divines have always been great proficients. In polite literature he was the rival, in science and philosophy the superior, by many degrees, of his great cotemporary St Jerome. But it was a culpable deference to the authority even of so great and good a man, if his doubts were in any case turned into objections, and the interpretation of Scripture adjusted to opinions which he himself propounds with doubt and hesitation. Those in latter time, who have improved upon St. Austin's hint of figurating this passage, have succeeded no better than they who have made the like attempt upon the article of our Lord's descent in the creed. They tell us, that by the souls in prison are to be understood the Gentile world in bondage and captivity to sin and Satan, and held in the chains of their own lusts; and for confirmation of

this, they refer to those passages of the prophet Isaiah in which it is predicted of Christ, that he is to bring the prisoners out of prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house,—that he is to say to the prisoners, ‘Go forth,’—that he is to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those that are bound.

Now, we deny not that the state of the unregenerate, carnal man, is indeed represented in Scripture under the images of captivity and bondage, and his sinful lusts under the image of chains and fetters; but, with respect to the alleged passages from the prophet Isaiah,—in the last of them most indubitably, and I believe in all, but in the last without doubt,—the prison is no other than that self-same place which is the prison or place of safe keeping in this text of St. Peter, according to our notion of it. The enlargement of the saints from the confinement of that place is the liberation predicted. Their souls in that place are the captives to whom the Redeemer, at the season of his final triumph over death and hell, shall say, ‘Go forth.’ These texts of the prophets, therefore, rather afford a confirmation of the literal acceptance of the apostle’s words, than of those jejune figurative interpretations, which modern criticism, scared at the bugbear of purgatory, would substitute for the plain and obvious sense.

It cannot, however, be dissembled, that difficulties arise out of the particular character of the souls in custody; to which I shall give such consideration as the time will permit.

The souls in custody, to whom our Saviour went in his disembodied soul and preached, were those ‘which sometimes were disobedient.’ The expres-

sion 'sometime were,' or 'one while had been, disobedient, implies that they were recovered, however, from that disobedience, and, before their death, had been brought to repentance and faith in the Redeemer to come. To such souls he went and preached. But what did he preach to departed souls, and what could be the end of his preaching? Certainly he preached neither repentance nor faith; for the preaching of either comes too late for the departed soul. These souls had believed and repented, or they had not been in that part of the nether regions which the soul of the Redeemer visited. Nor was the end of his preaching any liberation of them from we know not what purgatorial pains, of which the Scriptures give not the slightest intimation. But if he went to proclaim to them (and to proclaim or publish is the true sense of the word 'to preach') the glad tidings that he had actually offered the sacrifice of their redemption, and was about to appear before the Father as their intercessor, in the merit of his own blood, this was a preaching fit to be addressed to departed souls, and would give new animation and assurance to their hope of the consummation in due season of their bliss; and this, it may be presumed, was the end of his preaching. But the great difficulty, in the description of the souls to whom this preaching for this purpose was addressed, is this, that they were souls of some of the antediluvian race. Not that it at all startles me to find antediluvian souls in safe keeping for final salvation: on the contrary, I should find it very difficult to believe (unless I were to read it somewhere in the Bible) that of the millions that perished in the general deluge, all died hardened in impeni-

tence and unbelief, insomuch that not one of that race could be an object of future mercy, beside the eight persons who were miraculously saved in the ark, for the purpose of repeopling the depopulated earth. Nothing in the general plan of God's dealings with mankind, as revealed in Scripture, makes it necessary to suppose, that, of the antediluvian race who might repent upon Noah's preaching, more would be saved from the temporal judgments than the purpose of a gradual repopulation of the world demanded; or to suppose, on the other hand, that all who perished in the flood are to perish everlastingly in the lake of fire. But the great difficulty, of which perhaps I may be unable to give any adequate solution, is this,—for what reason should the proclamation of the finishing of the great work of redemption be addressed exclusively to the souls of these antediluvian penitents? Were not the souls of the penitents of later ages equally interested in the joyful tidings? To this I can only answer; that I think I have observed in some parts of Scripture, an anxiety, if the expression may be allowed, of the sacred writers to convey distinct intimations that the antediluvian race is not uninterested in the redemption and the final retribution. It is for this purpose, as I conceive, that in the description of the general resurrection, in the visions of the Apocalypse, it is mentioned with a particular emphasis, that the 'sea gave up the dead that were in it;' which I cannot be content to understand of the few persons—few in comparison of the total of mankind—lost at different times by shipwreck, (a poor circumstance to find a place in the midst of the magnificent images which surround it,) but of the

myriads who perished in the general deluge, and found their tomb in the waters of that raging ocean. It may be conceived, that the souls of those who died in that dreadful visitation, might from that circumstance have peculiar apprehensions of themselves as the marked victims of divine vengeance, and might peculiarly need the consolation which the preaching of our Lord in the subterranean regions afforded to these prisoners of hope. However that may be, thither the apostle says, 'he went and preached.' Is any difficulty that may present itself to the human mind, upon the circumstances of that preaching, of sufficient weight to make the thing unfit to be believed upon the word of the apostle? Or, are we justified, if for such difficulties, we abandon the plain sense of the apostle's words, and impose upon them another meaning not easily adapted to the words, though more proportioned to the capacity of our understanding,—especially when it is confirmed by other Scriptures, that he went to that place? In that place he could not but find the souls which are in it in safe keeping; and, in some way or other, it cannot but be supposed that he would hold conference with them; and a particular conference with one class might be the means, and certainly could be no obstruction to a general communication with all. If the clear assertions of holy writ are to be discredited, on account of difficulties which may seem to the human mind to arise out of them, little will remain to be believed in revealed, or even in what is called natural religion: we must immediately part with the doctrines of atonement—of gratuitous redemption—of justification by faith, without the works of the law—of

sanctification by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and we must part at once with the hope of the resurrection. 'How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?' are questions more easily asked than answered, unless it may be an answer, to refer the proposer of them to the promises of holy writ; and the power of God to make good those promises.

Having now, I trust, shown that the article of Christ's descent into hell is to be taken as a plain matter of fact, in the literal meaning of the words,—having exhibited the positive proof that we find of this fact in holy writ—having asserted the literal meaning of my text, and displayed, in its full force, the convincing proof to be deduced from this passage in particular, I shall now, with great brevity, demonstrate the great use and importance of the fact itself as a point of Christian doctrine.

Its great use is this,—that it is a clear confutation of the dismal notion of death as a temporary extinction of the life of the whole man; or, what is no less gloomy and discouraging, the notion of the sleep of the soul in the interval between death and the resurrection. Christ was made so truly man, that whatever took place in the human nature of Christ may be considered as a model and example of what must take place, in a certain due proportion and degree, in every man united to him. Christ's soul survived the death of his body: therefore shall the soul of every believer survive the body's death. Christ's disembodied soul descended into hell; thither, therefore, shall the soul of every believer in Christ descend. In that place, the soul of Christ, in its separate state, possessed and exercised active powers; in the same place, therefore, shall

the believer's soul possess and exercise activity. Christ's soul was not left in hell ; neither shall the souls of his servants there be left but for a season. The appointed time will come, when the Redeemer shall set open the doors of their prison-house, and say to his redeemed, 'Go forth.'

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SERMON XV.

THE LAST ENEMY.

BY DR. DONNE.

[John Donne, born 1573, was made Dean of St. Paul's in 1621,
and died in 1631.]

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SERMON XV

1 CORINTHIANS, XV. 26.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death.

THIS is a text of the resurrection, and it is not Easter yet; but it is Easter eve; all Lent, is but the vigil, the eve of Easter: to so long a festival as never shall end, the resurrection, we may well begin the eve betimes. Forty years long was God grieved for that generation which he loved: let us be content to humble ourselves forty days, to be fitter for that glory which we expect. In the book of God there are many songs; there is but one Lamentation: and that one song of Solomon, nay, some one of David's hundred and fifty Psalms, is longer than the whole book of Lamentations. Make way to an everlasting Easter, by a short Lent; to an undeterminable glory, by a temporary humiliation. You must weep these tears, tears of contrition, tears of mortification, before God will wipe all tears from your eyes. You must die this death, this death of the righteous, the death to sin, before this last enemy, death, shall be destroyed in you, and

you made partakers of everlasting life, in soul and body too.

Our division shall be but a short, and our whole exercise but a larger paraphrase upon the words. The words imply first, that the kingdom of Christ, which must be perfected, must be accomplished, (because all things must be subdued unto him,) is not yet perfected, not accomplished yet. Why? What lacks it? It lacks the bodies of men, which yet lie under the dominion of another. When we shall also see by that metaphor which the Holy Ghost chooseth to express that in, which is, that there is an enemy, and so a war, and therefore that kingdom is not perfected, that he places perfect happiness, and perfect glory, in perfect peace. But then, how far is any state consisting of many men, how far the state and condition of any one man in particular, from this perfect peace? How truly a warfare is this life, if the kingdom of heaven itself have not this peace in perfection! And it hath it not, because there is an enemy: though that enemy shall not overthrow it, yet, because it plots and works, and machinates, and would overthrow it, this is a defect in that peace.

Who then is this enemy? An enemy that may thus far think himself equal to God, that as no man ever saw God and lived; so no man ever saw this enemy and lived, for it is death; and in this may think himself in number superior to God, that many men live who shall never see God. But, *quis homo* is David's question, which was never answered, 'Is there any man that lives, and shall not see death?' An enemy that is so well victualled against man, as that he cannot want as long as there are men, for

he feeds upon man himself. And so well armed against man, as that he cannot want munition, while there are men, for he fights with our weapons; our own faculties, nay, our calamities, yea, our own pleasures are our death. And therefore he is, saith the text, 'the last enemy.'

We have other enemies;—Satan about us, sin within us; but the power of both these this enemy shall destroy; but when they are destroyed, he shall retain a hostile and triumphant dominion over us. But *usque quo, Domine?* How long, O Lord; for ever? No, he shall be destroyed: we see this enemy all the way, and all the way we feel him; but we shall see him destroyed. But how? or when? At and by the resurrection of our bodies; for, as upon my expiration, my transmigration from hence, as soon as my soul enters into heaven, I shall be able to say to the angels, I am of the same stuff as you, spirit and spirit, and therefore let me stand with you, and look upon the face of your God and my God; so at the resurrection of this body, I shall be able to say to the angel of the great council, the Son of God, Christ Jesus himself, I am of the same stuff as you, body and body, flesh and flesh; and therefore let me sit down with you, at the right hand of the Father, in an everlasting security from this last enemy, death, who is now destroyed. And in these seven steps we shall pass apace, and yet clearly, through this paraphrase.

We begin with this: that the kingdom of heaven hath not all that it must have to a consummate perfection, till it have bodies too. In those infinite millions of millions of generations, in which the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity enjoyed

themselves one another, and no more, they thought not their glory so perfect, but that it might receive an addition from creatures; and therefore they made a world, a material world, a corporeal world,—they would have bodies. In that noble part of that world which Moses called the firmament, that great expansion from God's chair to his footstool, from heaven to earth, there was a defect, which God did not supply that day, nor the next; but the fourth day he did; for that day he made those bodies, those great and lightsome bodies, the sun, and moon, and stars, and placed them in the firmament. So also the heaven of heavens, the presence chamber of God himself, expects the presence of our bodies.

No state upon earth can subsist without those bodies, men, of their own. For men that are supplied from others, may either in necessity, or in indignation, be withdrawn, and so that state which stood upon foreign legs, sinks. Let the head be gold, and the arms silver, and the belly brass; if the feet be clay¹—men that may slip and moulder away—all is but an image, all is but a dream of an image: for foreign helps are rather crutches than legs. There must be bodies—men; and able bodies, able men; men that eat the good things of the land, their own figs and olives; men not macerated with extortions. They are glorified bodies that make up the kingdom of heaven; bodies that partake of the good of the state, that make up the state; bodies, able bodies, and lastly, bodies inanimated with one soul, one vegetative soul; all must be sensible and compassionate of one another's

¹ Dan. ii. 31.

misery ; and especially the immortal soul, one supreme soul, one religion.

The kingdom of heaven must have bodies. Kingdoms of the earth must have them ; and if upon the earth thou beest in the way to heaven, thou must have a body too, a body of thine own, a body in thy possession : for thy body hath thee, and not thou it, if thy body tyrannise over thee. If thou canst not withdraw thine eye from an object of temptation, or withhold thy hand from subscribing against thy conscience, nor thine ear from a popular and seditious libel, what hast thou towards a man ? Thou hast no soul, nay thou hast no body : there is a body, but thou hast it not, it is not thine, it is not in thy power. 'Thy body will rebel against thee even in a sin : it will not perform a sin, when, and where thou wouldst have it : much more will it rebel against any good work, till thou have imprinted the marks of the Lord Jesus,'¹ which were but exemplar in him, but are essential and necessary to thee—abstinences, and such discreet disciplines and mortifications as may subdue that body to thee, and make it thine : for till then it is but thine enemy, and maintains a war against thee ; and war and enemy is the metaphor which the Holy Ghost hath taken here to express a want, a kind of imperfectness even in heaven itself. *Bellum symbolum mali*. As peace is of all goodness, so war is an emblem, a hieroglyphic of all misery ; and that is our second step in this paraphrase.

If the feet of them that preach peace be beautiful, (and, 'O, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach peace !' The prophet Isaiah asks the

¹ Gal. vi. 17.

question,¹ and the prophet Nahum asks² it, and the apostle Paul asks it³—they all ask it, but none answers it,) who shall answer us, if we ask, How beautiful is his face who is the author of this peace, when we shall see that in the glory of heaven, the centre of all true peace? It was the inheritance of Christ Jesus upon the earth; he had it at his birth, he brought it with him: ‘Glory be to God on high, peace upon earth!’⁴ It was his purchase upon earth: ‘He made peace (indeed he bought peace) through the blood of his cross.’⁵ It was his testament, when he went from earth: ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you.’⁶ Divide with him in that blessed inheritance, partake with him in that blessed purchase, enrich thyself with that blessed legacy,—his peace.

Let the whole world be in thy consideration as one house; and then consider in that, in the peaceful harmony of creatures, in the peaceful succession and connexion of causes and effects, the peace of nature. Let this kingdom, where God hath blessed thee with a being, be the gallery, the best room of that house; and consider in the two walls of that gallery, the church and the state, the peace of a royal and a religious wisdom. Let thine own family be a cabinet in this gallery; and find in all the boxes thereof, in the several duties of wife, and children, and servants, the peace of virtue, and of the father and mother of all virtues, active discretion, passive obedience; and then, lastly, let thine own bosom be the secret box and reserve in this cabinet, and then the best jewel in the best cabinet,

¹ Chap. lii. 7.² Chap. i. 15.³ Rom. x. 15.⁴ Luke ii. 14.⁵ Colos. i. 20.⁶ John xiv. 27.

and that in the best gallery of the best house that can be had, peace with the creature, peace in the church, peace in the state, peace in thy house, peace in thy heart, is a fair model, and a lovely design even of the heavenly Jerusalem, where there is no object but peace.

And therefore the Holy Ghost, to intimate to us that happy perfectness which we shall have at last, and not till then, chooses the metaphor of an enemy, and enmity, to avert us from looking for true peace from any thing that presents itself in the way. Neither truly could the Holy Ghost imprint more horror by any word than that which intimates war, as the word *enemy* does. It is but a little way that the poet hath got in description of war, *Jam seges est*—that now, that place is ploughed where the great city stood: for it is not so great a depopulation to translate a city from merchants to husbandmen, from shops to ploughs, as it is from many husbandmen to one shepherd; and yet that hath been often done. And all that, at most, is but a depopulation, it is not a devastation, that Troy was ploughed. But when the prophet Isaiah comes to the devastation, to the extermination of a war, he expresses it first thus: ‘Where there were a thousand vineyards at a cheap rate, all the land became briars and thorns.’¹ That is much; but there is more—‘The earth shall be removed out of her place; that land, that nation, shall no more be called that nation, nor that land.’² But, yet more than that too; not only not that people, but no other shall ever inhabit it: ‘It shall never be inhabited from generation to generation, neither shall

¹ Isai. vii. 23.

² Ib. xiii. 13.

shepherds be there; not only no merchant, nor husbandman, but no depopulator; none but owls, and ostriches, and satyrs;¹ indeed God knows what—*ochim* and *ziim*, words which truly we cannot translate.

In a word, the horror of war is best discerned in the company he keeps, in his associates. And when the prophet Gad brought war into the presence of David, there came with him famine and pestilence.² And when famine entered, we see the effects; it brought mothers to eat their children of a span long. And when war's other companion, the pestilence, entered, we see the effects of that too: in less than half the time that it was threatened for, it devoured threescore and ten thousand of David's men; and yet for all the vehemence, the violence, the impetuosity of this pestilence, David chose this pestilence rather than a war. *Militia* and *malitia*, are words of so near a sound, as that the Vulgate edition takes them as one. For where the prophet speaking of the miseries that Jerusalem had suffered, says, *finita militia ejus*, let her warfare be at an end,' they read *finita malitia ejus*, 'let her misery be at an end:'³ war and misery is all one thing. But is there any of this in heaven? Even the saints in heaven lack something of the consummation of their happiness, because they have an enemy. And that is our third and next step.

Michael and his angels fought against the devil and his angels; though that war ended in victory, yet (taking that war, as divers expositors do, for the fall of angels) that kingdom lost so many inhabi-

¹ Isai. xiii. 19.² 2 Sam. xxiv. 13.³ Isai. xl. 2.

tants, as that all the souls of all that shall be saved shall but fill the places of them that fell, and so make up that kingdom but-as well as it was before that war: so ill effects accompany even the most victorious war. There is no war in heaven, yet all is not well, because there is an enemy; for that enemy would kindle a war again, but that he remembers how ill he sped last time he did so. It is not an enemy that invades neither, but only detains: he detains the bodies of the saints which are in heaven, and therefore is an enemy to the kingdom of Christ. He that detains the souls of men in superstition, he that detains the hearts and allegiance of subjects in an hesitation, a vacillation, an irresolution, where they shall fix them, whether upon their sovereign, or a foreign power, he is in the notion and acceptation of 'enemy' in this text; an enemy, though no hostile act be done. It is not a war, it is but an enemy; not an invading, but a detaining enemy; and then this enemy is but one enemy, and yet he troubles and retards the consummation of that kingdom.

Antichrist alone is enemy enough: but never carry this consideration beyond thyself. As long as there remains in thee one sin, or the sinful gain of that one sin, so long there is one enemy; and where there is one enemy, there is no peace. Gardeners that husband their ground to the best advantage, sow all their seeds in such order, one under another, that their garden is always full of that which is then in season. If thou sin with that providence, with that seasonableness, that all thy spring, thy youth be spent in wantonness; all thy summer, thy middle-age in ambition; and the ways of preferment; and thy autumn, thy winter

in indevotion and covetousness, though thou have no further taste of licentiousness, in thy middle-age, thou hast thy satiety in that sin,—nor of ambition in thy last years, thou hast accumulated titles of honour; yet all the way thou hast had one enemy, and therefore never any perfect peace. But who is this one enemy in this text? As long as we put it off, and as loath as we are to look this enemy in the face, yet we must, though it be death. And this is the fourth step in this paraphrase.

‘Arise and go down,’¹ says the prophet Jeremy, that is, say the expositors, to the consideration of thy mortality: a descent with an ascension. Our grave is upward, and our heart is upon Jacob’s ladder, in the way, and nearer to heaven. Our daily funerals are some emblems of that; for though we be laid down in the earth after, yet we are lifted up upon men’s shoulders before. We rise in the descent to death, and so we do in the descent to the contemplation of it. In all the potter’s house, is there one vessel made of better stuff than clay? There is his matter. And of all forms, a circle is the perfectest, and art thou loath to make up that circle, with returning to the earth again?

Thou must, though thou be loath. *Fortasse*, says St. Augustine, (that word of contingency, of casualty,) ‘perchance,’ *in omnibus ferme rebus præterquam in morte locum habet*—“hath place in all human actions excepting death.” He makes his example thus:—such a man is married; where he would, or at least where he must, where his pa-

¹ Jer. xviii. 2.

rents, or his guardian will have him. Shall he have children? *Fortasse*, says he—they are a young couple, perchance they shall. And shall those children be sons? *Fortasse*—they are of a strong constitution, perchance they shall. And shall those sons live to be men? *Fortasse*—they are from healthy parents, perchance they shall. And when they have lived to be men, shall they be good men; such as good men may be glad they may live? *Fortasse*, still. They are of virtuous parents—it may be they shall: but when they are come to that *Morientur*—shall those good men die? Here, says that Father the *fortasse* vanishes; here it is *omnino, certè, sine dubitatione*—“infallibly, inevitably, irrecoverably” they must die. Doth man not die, even in his birth? The breaking of prison is death, and what is our birth but a breaking of prison? As soon as we were clothed by God, our very apparel was an emblem of death. In the skins of dead beasts he covered the skins of dying men. As soon as God set us on work, our very occupation was an emblem of death. It was to dig the earth; not to dig pitfalls for other men, but graves for ourselves. Hath any man here forgot to-day, that yesterday is dead? And the bell tolls for to-day, and will ring out anon; and for as much of every one of us, as appertains to this day. “We die every day, and we die all the day long; and because we are not absolutely dead, we call that an eternity, an eternity of dying,”¹ says St. Jerome. And is there comfort in that state? Why, that is the state of hell itself—eternal dying, and not dead.

But for this there is enough said, by the moral-

¹ Quotidiè morimur, et tamen nos esse æternos putamus.

ist; (that we may respite divine proofs, for divine points anon—for our several resurrections;) for this death is merely natural, and it is enough that the moralist says, *Mors lex, tributum, officium mortalium*.¹ First it is *lex*, you were born under that law, upon that condition, to die: so it is a rebellious thing not to be content to die, it opposes the law. Then it is *tributum*, an imposition which nature, the queen of this world, lays upon us, and which she will take when and where she list; here a young man, there an old man; here a happy, there a miserable man: and so it is a seditious thing not to be content to die; it opposes the prerogative. And lastly, it is *officium*: men are to have their turns, to take their time, and then to give way by death to successors; and so, not to be content to die, opposes the frame and form of government. It comes equally to us all, and makes us all equal when it comes. The ashes of an oak in the chimney, are no epitaph of that oak, to tell me how high or how large that was: it tells me not what flocks it sheltered while it stood, nor what men it hurt when it fell. The dust of great persons' graves is speechless too; it says nothing, it distinguishes nothing. As soon the dust of a wretch whom thou wouldst not, as of a prince whom thou couldst not look upon, will trouble thine eyes, if the wind blow it thither; and when a whirlwind hath blown the dust of the church-yard into the church, and the man sweeps out the dust of the church into the church-yard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again, and to pronounce—This is the patrician; this is the noble flour, and this the yeomanly, this the plebeian bran. So is the

¹ Seneca.

death of Jezabel (Jezabel was a queen) expressed : ' They shall not say, this is Jezabel ;' not only not wonder that it is, nor pity that it should be, but they shall not say—they shall not know—This is Jezabel. It comes to all, to all alike ; but not alike welcome to all. To die too willingly—out of impatience to wish, or out of violence to hasten death ; or to die too unwillingly—to murmur at God's purpose revealed by age, or by sickness, are equal distempers ; and to harbour a disobedient loathness all the way, or to entertain it at last, argues but an irreligious ignorance—an ignorance, that death is in nature but an expiration, a breathing out, and we do that every minute ;—an ignorance that God himself took a day to rest in, and a good man's grave is his sabbath ;—an ignorance that Abel, the best of those whom we can compare with him, was the first that died. Howsoever, whensoever, all times are God's times : " God calls the good to take them from their dangers, and God takes the bad to take them from their triumph." ¹ And therefore neither grudge that thou goest, nor that worse stay, for God can make his profit of both : God reprieves him to mend him, or to make another better by his exercise. And, not to exult in the misery of another, but to glorify God in the ways of his justice, let him know, ' how long soever he live, how long soever he lie sick, that man dies a sudden death, who never thought of it.' ³ If we consider death in St. Paul's *statutum est*, ' it is decreed that all

¹ Vocantur boni ne diutiùs vexentur à noxiis, mali ne diutiùs bonos persequantur.—August.

² Aut ideo vivit ut corrigatur, aut ideo ut per illum bonus exerceatur.

³ Quantumcunque serò, subito ex hac vita tollitur, qui finem prævidere nescivit.—Gregor.

men must die,'—there death is indifferent. If we consider it in his *mori lucrum*, 'that it is an advantage to die,'—there death is good; and so much the Vulgate edition seems to intimate, when, whereas we read, (Deut. xxx. 19,) 'I have set before you life and death,' that reads it, *vitam et bonum*, 'life, and that which is good.' If then death be at the worst indifferent, and to the good, good, how is it an 'enemy' to the kingdom of Christ? for that is the fifth and next step in this paraphrase.

First, God did not make death, says the wise man.¹ And therefore St. Augustine makes a reasonable prayer to God: "Suffer not, O Lord, death, whom thou didst not make, to have dominion over me whom thou didst."² Whence then came death?—The same wise man hath showed us the father: through envy of the devil, came death into the world;³ and a wiser than he, the Holy Ghost himself, hath showed us the mother: 'By sin came death into the world.'⁴ But yet if God have naturalized death, taken death into the number of his servants, and made death his commissioner to punish sin, and he do but that, how is death an enemy? First he was an enemy in invading Christ, who was not in his commission, because he had no sin; and still he is an enemy, because still he adheres to the enemy. Death hangs upon the edge of every persecutor's sword; and upon the sting of every calumniator's, and accuser's tongue. In the bull of Phalaris, in the bulls of Basan, in the bulls of Babylon—the shrewdest bulls of all—in temporal,

¹ Sap. i. 13.

² Ne permittas, Domine, quod non fecisti, dominari creaturæ quam fecisti.—Sap. i. 13.

³ Sap. ii. ult.

⁴ Rom. v. 12.

in spiritual persecutions—ever since God put an enmity between man and the serpent, from the time of Cain who began in a murder, to the time of Antichrist, who proceeds in massacres—death hath adhered to the enemy, and so is an enemy.

Death hath a commission:—‘The reward of sin is death;’ but whereas God gives a *supersedeas*, upon that commission—‘As I live, saith the Lord, I would have no sinner die’—not die the second death—yet death proceeds to that execution. And whereas the enemy, whom he adheres to, the serpent himself, hath power but upon the heel, the lower, the mortal part, the body of man, death is come up into our windows,¹ saith the prophet, into our best lights, our understandings, and benights us there, either with ignorance before sin, or with senselessness after; and a sheriff that should burn him, who were condemned to be hanged, were a murderer, though that man must have died: to come in by the door, by the way of sickness upon the body, is, but to come in at the window by the way of sin, is not, death’s commission; God opens not that window.

So then he is an enemy; for they that adhere to the enemy are enemies; and adhering is not only a present subministration of supply to the enemy, (for that death doth not,) but it is also a disposition to assist the enemy, then when he shall be strong enough to make benefit of that assistance. And so death adheres: when sin and Satan have weakened body and mind, death enters upon both. And in that respect he is the last enemy; and that is our sixth and next step in this paraphrase.

¹ Jer. ix. 21.

Death is the last, and in that respect the worst enemy. In an enemy, that appears at first, when we are or may be provided against him, there is some of that which we call honour; but in the enemy that reserves himself unto the last, and attends our weak estate, there is more danger. Keep it, where I intend it, in that which is my sphere, the conscience. If mine enemy meet me betimes in my youth; in an object of temptation, (so Joseph's enemy met him in Potiphar's wife,) yet, if I do not adhere to this enemy—dwell upon a delightful meditation of that sin; if I do not fuel and foment that sin, assist and encourage that sin by high diet, wanton discourse, other provocation; I shall have reason on my side, and I shall have grace on my side, and I shall have the history of a thousand that have perished by that sin on my side. Nay, perchance sometimes the virtue of that woman, whom I solicit, will assist me. But, when I lie under the hands of that enemy that hath reserved himself to the last—to my last bed—then, when I shall be able to stir no limb in any other measure than a fever or a palsy shall shake them; when everlasting darkness shall have an incohesion in the present dimness of mine eyes, and the everlasting gnashing in the present chattering of my teeth, and the everlasting worm in the present gnawing of the agonies of my body, and anguishes of my mind; when the last enemy shall watch my remediless body and my disconsolate soul there, where not the physician, in his way, perchance not the priest in his, shall be able to give any assistance; and, when he hath sported himself with my misery upon that stage, my death-bed shall shift the scene, and throw me from that bed into the

grave, and there triumph over me, God knows, how many generations, till the Redeemer, my Redeemer; the Redeemer of all me, body as well as soul, come again;—as death is the enemy which watches me at my last weakness, and shall hold me, when I shall be no more, till that angel come, ‘who shall say, and swear that time shall be no more:’—in that consideration, in that apprehension, he is the powerfulest, the fearfulest enemy. And yet even there this enemy shall be destroyed; which is our seventh and last step in this paraphrase.

This destruction, this abolition of this last enemy, is by the resurrection; for the text is part of an argument for the resurrection. And truly, it is a fair intimation, and testimony of an everlasting end in that state of the resurrection—that no time shall end it—that we have it presented to us in all the parts of time; in the past, in the present, and in the future. We had a resurrection in prophecy; we have a resurrection in the present working of God’s Spirit; we shall have a resurrection in the final consummation. The prophet speaks in the future: ‘He will swallow up death in victory;’¹ there it is *abolebit*, ‘he will destroy.’ All the evangelists speak historically of matter of fact; in them it is *abolevit*, ‘he has destroyed.’ And here, in this apostle, it is in the present, *aboletur*, ‘now he is destroyed.’ And this exhibits unto us a threefold occasion of advancing our devotion, in considering a threefold resurrection; first, a resurrection from dejections and calamities in this world, a temporary resurrection; secondly, a resurrection from sin, a

¹ Isaiah, xxv. 8.

spiritual resurrection ; and then a resurrection from the grave, a final resurrection.

1. From calamity : when the prophets speak of a resurrection in the Old Testament, for the most part their principal intention is upon a temporal restitution from calamities that oppress them then. Neither doth Calvin carry those emphatical words, which are so often cited for a proof of the last resurrection—‘ that he knows his Redeemer lives, that he knows he shall stand the last man upon earth, that though his body be destroyed, yet in his flesh and with his eyes he shall see God,’¹ to any higher sense than so, that how low soever he be brought, to what desperate state soever he be reduced in the eyes of the world, yet he assures himself of a resurrection, a reparation, a restitution to his former bodily health, and worldly fortune which he had before. And such a resurrection we all know Job had.

In that famous and most considerable prophetic vision which God exhibited to Ezekiel, where God set the prophet in a valley of very many, and very dry bones, and invites the several joints to knit again, ties them with their old sinews and ligaments, clothes them in their old flesh, wraps them in their old skin, and calls life into them again ; God’s principal intention in that vision was thereby to give them an assurance of a resurrection from their present calamity ; but not that there is also good evidence of the last resurrection in that vision too. Thus far God argues with them *à re nota* ;—from that which they knew before, the final resurrection ; he assures them that which they knew not

¹ Job, xix. 25.

till then—a present resurrection from those pressures. ‘Remember by this vision, that which you all know already, that at last I shall re-unite the dead, and dry bones of all men in a general resurrection. And then, if you remember, if you consider, if you look upon that, can you doubt, but that I, who can do that, can also recollect you, from your present desperation, and give you a resurrection to your former temporal happiness?’ And this truly arises pregnantly, necessarily, out of the prophet’s answer. God asks him there, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ And he answers, ‘O Lord God, thou knowest.’ The prophet answers according to God’s intention in the question. If that had been for their living in the last resurrection, Ezekiel would have answered God as Martha answered Christ, when he said, ‘Thy brother Lazarus shall rise again;’—‘I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection at the last day;’¹ but when the question was, whether men so macerated, so scattered in this world, could have a resurrection to their former temporal happiness here, that puts the prophet to his, ‘O Lord, thou knowest.’ It is in thy breast to propose it; it is in thy hand to execute it; whether thou do it, or do it not, thy name be glorified. It falls not within our conjecture, which way it shall please thee to take for this resurrection: ‘Thou Lord, and thou only knowest.’ Which is also the sense of those words: ‘Others were tortured, and accepted not a deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.’² A present deliverance had been a resurrection, but to be the more sure of a better hereafter, they less respected that. According to that of our Saviour,

¹ John, xi. 24.² Heb. xi. 35.

‘He that finds his life shall lose it;’¹ he that fixeth himself too earnestly upon his resurrection shall lose a better.

This is then the prophetic resurrection for the future, but a future in this world; that if rulers take counsel against the Lord, the Lord shall have their counsel in derision;² if they take arms against the Lord, the Lord shall break their bows, and cut their spears in sunder; if they hiss and gnash their teeth, and say,—We have swallowed him up; if we be made their by-word, their parable, their proverb, their libel, the theme and burden of their songs, as Job complains; yet, whatsoever fall upon me, damage, distress, scorn, or ‘the last enemy,’ death itself, that death which we consider here, death of possessions, death of estimation, death of health, death of contentment;—yet *abolebitur*, it shall be destroyed in a resurrection, in the return of the light of God’s countenance upon me even in this world. And this is the first resurrection.

2. But this first resurrection, which is but from temporal calamities, doth so little concern a true and established Christian, whether it come or no, (for still Job’s basis is his basis, and his centre; though he kill me—kill me in all these several deaths, and give me no resurrection in this world, yet I will trust in him,) it is as though this first resurrection were no resurrection, not to be numbered among the resurrections. St. John calls that which we call the second, which is from sin, the first resurrection: ‘Blessed and holy is he, who hath part in the first resurrection.’³ And this resurrection Christ implies, when he says, ‘Verily,

¹ Matt. x. 39.

² Psalm ii. 4.

³ Apoc. xx. 6.

verily, I say unto you, the hour, is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear it shall live:¹ that is, by the voice of the word of life, the gospel of repentance, they shall have a spiritual resurrection to a new life.

St. Austin and Lactantius both were so hard in believing the roundness of the earth, that they thought that those *homines pensiles*, as they call them—those men that hang upon the other cheek of the face of the earth—those antipodes, whose feet are directly against ours, must necessarily fall from the earth, if the earth be round. But whither should they fall? if they fall, they must fall upwards, for heaven is above them too, as it is to us. So if the spiritual antipodes of this world, the sons of God, that walk with feet opposed in ways contrary to the sons of men, shall be said to fall, when they fall to repentance, to mortification, to a religious negligence, and contempt of the pleasures of this life, truly their fall is upwards—they fall towards heaven. ‘God gives breath unto the people upon the earth,’ says the prophet, ‘and spirit to them that work therein.’² Our translation carries that no further; but Irenæus makes a useful difference between ‘breath’ and ‘spirit’—that God gives breath to all upon earth, but his Spirit only to them who tread in a religious scorn upon earthly things.

Is it not a strange phrase of the apostle, ‘Mortify your members; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affections?’³ He does not say, mortify your members against those sins, but he calls those

¹ John, v. 25.² Isaiah, xlv. 5.³ Col. iii. 5.

very sins the members of our bodies, as though we were elemented and compacted of nothing but sin, till we come to this resurrection, this mortification, which is indeed our vivification; 'till we bear in our body the dying of our Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body.'¹ God may give the other resurrection from worldly misery, and not give this. A widow may be rescued from the sorrow and solitariness of that state, by having a plentiful fortune; there she hath one resurrection; but 'the widow that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she lives;'² she hath no second resurrection; and so in that sense, even this chapel may be a church-yard, men may stand, and sit, and kneel, and yet be dead; and any chamber alone may be a golgotha, a place of dead men's bones, of men not come to this resurrection, which is the renunciation of their beloved sin.

It was inhumanly said by Vitellius, upon the death of Otho, when he walked in the field of carcasses, where the battle was fought, "O how sweet a perfume is a dead enemy!" But it is a divine saying to thy soul, "O what a savour of life, unto life, is the death of a beloved sin!" What an angelical comfort was that to Joseph and Mary in Egypt, after the death of Herod, 'Arise, for they are dead that sought the child's life!'³ And even that comfort is multiplied upon thy soul, when the Spirit of God says to thee, Arise, come to this resurrection; for that Herod, that sin, that sought the life, the everlasting life of this child, the child of God, thy soul, is dead by repentance, dead by mortification. The highest cruelty that story relates,

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 10.² 1 Tim. v. 6.³ Mat. ii. 20.

or poets imagine, is when a persecutor will not afford a miserable man death—not be so merciful to him as to take his life. Thou hast made thy sin, thy soul, thy life; inanimated all thy actions, all thy purposes with that sin. Have pity on thy soul—be so merciful to thyself, as to take away that life by mortification, by repentance, and thou art come to this resurrection: and though a man may have the former resurrection, and not this,—peace in his fortune, and yet not peace in his conscience, yet whosoever hath this second, hath an infallible seal of the third resurrection too, to a fulness of glory in body, as well as in soul. For *spiritus maturam efficit carnem, et capacem incorruptelæ*; this resurrection by the spirit, mellows the body of man, and makes that capable of everlasting glory, which is the last weapon, by which the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed.¹

3. Upon that pious ground that all Scriptures were written for us, as we are Christians; that all Scriptures conduce to the proof of Christ, and of the Christian state; it is the ordinary manner of the Fathers to make all that David speaks historically of himself, and all that the prophet speaks futurally of the Jews, if those places may be referred to Christ, to refer them to Christ primarily; and but by reflection, and in a second consideration upon David, or upon the Jews. Thereupon do the Fathers (truly I think more generally, more unanimously, than in any other place of Scripture) take that place of Ezekiel which we spoke of before, to be primarily intended of the last resurrection, and but secondarily of the Jews' restitution.

¹ Irenæus.

But Gasper Sanctius, a learned Jesuit, (that is not so rare—but an ingenuous Jesuit too,) though he be bound, by the Council of Trent, to interpret Scriptures according to the Fathers, yet here he acknowledges the whole truth, that God's purpose was to prove, by that which they did know, which was the general resurrection, that which they knew not, their temporal restitution. Tertullian is vehement at first, but after, more supple. *Allegorice Scripturæ*, says he, *resurrectionem subradiant aliæ, aliæ determinant*: some figurative places of Scripture do intimate a resurrection, and some manifest it; and of those manifest places he takes this vision of Ezekiel to be one. But he comes after to this, *sit et corporum, et rerum, et meâ nihil interest*: let it signify a temporal resurrection, so it may signify the general resurrection of our bodies too, says he, and I am well satisfied; and then the truth satisfies him, for it doth signify both. It is true that Tertullian says, *de vacuo similitudo non competit*; if the vision be but a comparison, if there were no such thing as a resurrection, the comparison did not hold. *De nullo parabola non convenit*, says he, and truly: if there were no resurrection to which that parable might have relation, it were no parable. All that is true: but there was a resurrection always known to them, always believed by them; and that made their present resurrection from that calamity the more easy, the more intelligible, the more credible, the more discernible to them.

Let, therefore, God's method be thy method: fix thyself firmly upon that belief of the general resurrection, and thou wilt never doubt of either of the particular resurrections, either from sin, by God's

grace, or from worldly calamities, by God's power. For that last resurrection is the ground of all. By that *verè victa mors*, says Irenæus—this last enemy, death, is truly destroyed; because this last spoil, the body, is taken out of his hands. The same body, *eadem ovis*, (as the same Father notes.) Christ did not fetch another sheep to the flock, in the place of that which was lost, but the same sheep: God shall not give me another, a better body at the resurrection, but the same body made better; for if the flesh of man were not to be saved, the Divine Word would never have taken the flesh of man upon him.¹

The punishment that God laid upon Adam, 'In sweat and in sorrow shalt thou eat thy bread,'² is but 'till man return to dust:' but when man is returned to dust, God returns to the remembrance of that promise, 'Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.'³ A mercy already exhibited to us, in the person of our Saviour, Christ Jesus; in whom, (says St. Chrysostom) as God, by taking a handful for the first fruits, gave a blessing to the whole field, so he hath sealed the bodies of all mankind to his glory, by pre-assuming the body of Christ to that glory. For by that there is now *commercium inter cælum et terram*⁴—there is a trade driven, a staple established, between heaven and earth; *ibi caro nostra, hic Spiritus ejus*; thither have we sent our flesh, and hither hath he sent his Spirit.

This is the last abolition of this enemy, death; for, after this, the bodies of the saints he cannot

¹ Si non haberet caro salvari, nequiquam Verbum Dei caro factum fuisset.—Idem.

² Gen. iii. 17.

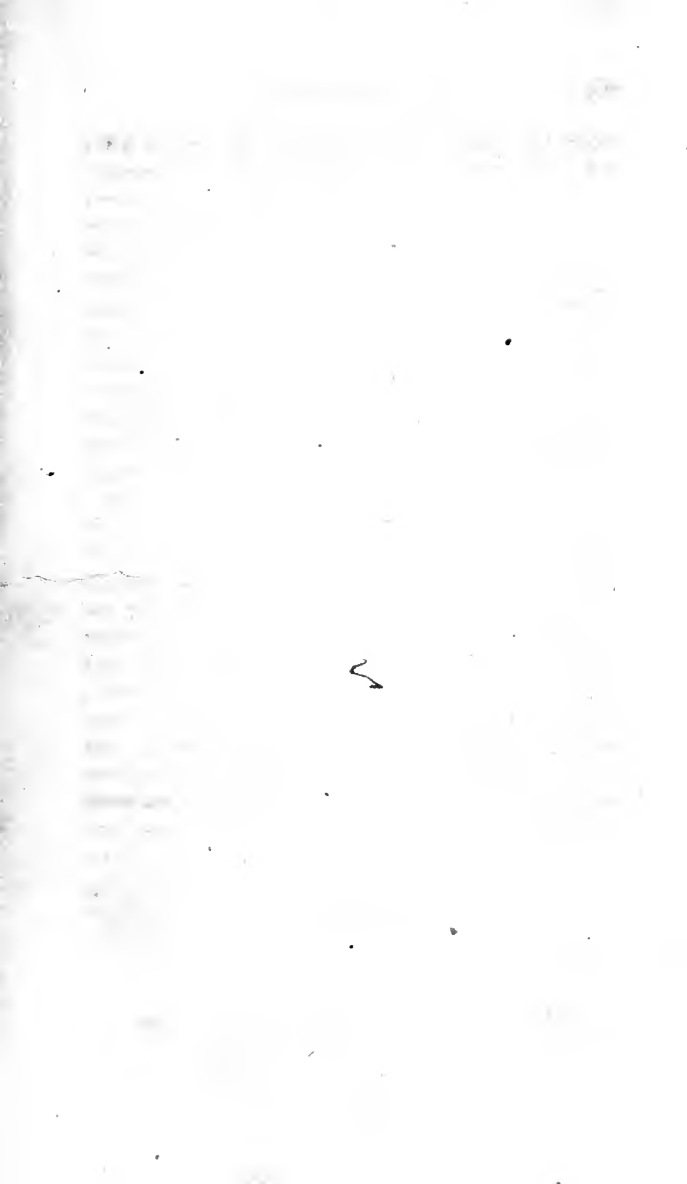
³ Isaiah, xvi. 19.

⁴ Bernard.

touch, the bodies of the damned he cannot kill; and if he could, he were not therein their enemy, but their friend. This is that blessed and glorious state, of which, when all the apostles met to make the creed, they could say no more, but 'I believe the resurrection of the body;' and when those two reverend Fathers, to whom it belongs, shall come to speak of it, upon the day proper for it, in this place, and if all the bishops that ever met in councils should meet them here, they could but second the apostles' *credo*, with their *anathema*. We believe, and woe be unto them that do not believe, the resurrection of the body; but in going about to express it the lips of an angel would be uncircumcised lips, and the tongue of an archangel would stammer. I offer not therefore at it; but in respect of, and with relation to that blessed state, according to the doctrine, and practice of our church, we do pray for the dead,—for the militant church upon earth, and the triumphant church in heaven, and the whole catholic church in heaven, and earth; we pray that God will be pleased to hasten that kingdom, that we with all others departed in the true faith of his holy name, may have this perfect consummation, both of body and soul in his everlasting glory. *Amen.*

THE END.







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